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How to justify a crusade? The conquest of Livonia and new crusade rhetoric in the early thirteenth century

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This article addresses the issue of how it was possible to justify a crusade to a region, such as the eastern shore of the Baltic, where there were no sacred shrines to protect or Christian lands to reconquer. Adopting a pluralist perspective of crusades, it argues that the Livonian crusade of the early thirteenth century offers some interesting clues to the new developments of crusading ideology. Conceiving of the conquest and conversion of Livonia as a crusade, albeit not quite equal to the liberation of Jerusalem, its initiators and apologists employed legal and rhetorical devices to justify the occupation of a region under the auspices of a crusade. This article examines these strategies through the medium of contemporary chronicles and papal letters.

Keywords: crusade; Livonian crusade; crusading ideology; Baltic Sea; Livonia

This article examines an apparently simple question: how to justify a crusade that did not aim at recovering the Holy Land. Or, put more precisely: how could one motivate a crusade in a region which had neither sacred sites to be visited nor Christians to be protected? These questions presume a particular notion of crusading. In recent decades, a close connection has been re-established in scholarly literature with the medieval tradition which represented the twelfth- and thirteenth-century wars of conquest and mission in the Baltic region through the prism of the crusades. In this line of thought, first formulated in the middle of the twelfth century by the papal court in Rome, the idea of a crusade, originally devised as a means of (re)capturing Jerusalem, was expanded to cover other areas by guaranteeing the participants in these new campaigns benefits equal or comparable to those afforded to the crusaders heading for the Holy Land. This tactic, however, necessarily forced popes and other apologists of the crusades to face a serious dilemma familiar to modern students of the crusades: how to explain the transfer of the privileges granted for crusading in the Holy Land to participants in campaigns in other regions. How could one speak about a crusade if the target of the campaign were not a (former) Christian area? Some modern historians have responded to this question by explicitly refraining from employing the word 'crusade' to characterise campaigns that were not directed at the Holy Land: to identify them as crusades would be an abuse of the idea as advanced by twelfth-century popes and its continuation by at least some modern scholars. This view, however, forces on us a very clear-cut definition of what a crusade might be and fails to note that, like all other historical phenomena, its

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nature changed over time.[1] Indeed, the main aim of the present paper is to demonstrate that at the beginning of the thirteenth century the notion of a crusade as it had previously been conceived underwent significant elaboration, both legal and rhetorical, with the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea and specifically Livonia being one of the main 'laboratories' where these new developments were worked out.[2]

What is a crusade? Revisiting an old debate

There is an extensive literature on the definition of a crusade. In this one can detect various historiographical approaches: among others, one might distinguish the generalist, pluralist, traditionalist and popularist.[3] For the purposes of this article, I propose to divide contemporary historians of the crusades into two main groups – the *purists* and the *pluralists* – at the risk of ignoring intermediate variants. The purists base their definition of crusade on the First Crusade – the penitential campaign to liberate Jerusalem from the unbelievers declared by Pope Urban II

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[1] The following abbreviations are used in this paper: *ACS*: G.H. Pertz, ed., *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*. MGH, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum 14 (Hanover: MGH, 1868); *CHL*: James A. Brundage, trans., *The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*. 2nd edn. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); *DD*: *Diplomatarium Danicum*. First series, *789–1249*, eds. C.A. Christensen and others. 7 vols. (Copenhagen: E. Munksgaard, 1957–1990); *HCL*: L. Arbusow and A. Bauer, eds., *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae*. MGH, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum (Hanover: Hahn, 1955); *LUB*: Friedrich Georg von Bunge and others, eds., *Liv-, esth- und curländisches Urkundenbuch*. 15 vols. in 2 series (Reval: Kluge und Ströhm, 1853–1914); MGH: Monumenta Germaniae Historica.
Or, in Christopher Tyerman's felicitous expression: 'The crusade meant different things to different peoples at different times.' Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, 1095–1588* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 1.
[2] For earlier discussions of legitimising Livonia as a destination of crusades, James A. Brundage, 'The Thirteenth-Century Livonian Crusade: Henricus de Lettis and the First Legatine Mission of Bishop William of Modena', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 20 (1972): 1–9, reprinted in idem, *The Crusades, Holy War and Canon Law* (Aldershot: Ashgate/Variorum, 1991), chapter 14; Claudio Carpini, 'La Crociata senza Terrasanta. Nota preliminare per una ricerca sulla Crociata nel Baltico', *Res Balticae. Miscellanea Italiana di Studi Baltistici* 9 (2003): 179–93; and Christopher Tyerman, 'Henry of Livonia and the Ideology of Crusading', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier. A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, eds. Marek Tamm, Linda Kaljundi and Carsten Selch Jensen (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 23–44. Analogous questions, looking at Spain, are discussed recently by Patrick J. O'Banion, 'What Has Iberia To Do With Jerusalem? Crusade and the Spanish Route to the Holy Land in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of Medieval History* 34 (2008): 383–95; William J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c.1095–c.1187* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), 120–78.
[3] Giles Constable, 'The Historiography of the Crusades', in idem, *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 3–44. See also Michel Balard, 'L'historiographie des croisades au XXe siècle (France, Allemagne et Italie)', *Revue Historique* 302 (2000): 973–99; José Manuel Rodrígues García, 'Historiografía de las Cruzadas', in *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, series 3, *Historia Medieval* 13 (2000): 341–95; Andrew Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States* (Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2004), 1–22; Franco Cardini, 'L'histoire des croisades et des pèlerinages au XXe siècle', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 49 (2006): 359–72; Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 1–23; Andrew Holt, 'Crusades Historiography', in *Handbook of Medieval Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen. 3 vols. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 1: 379–92; Michel Balard, 'The French Recent Historiography of the Holy War', in *La papauté et les croisades / The Papacy and the Crusades. Actes du VIIe Congrès de la Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East / Proceedings of the VIIth Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East*, ed. Michel Balard (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 45–52; Christopher Tyerman, *Debate on the Crusades* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

in 1095.[4] Thus, the 1095 crusade sets the standard against which all later campaigns must be measured to establish whether they might be defined as crusades. The nature of this standard is marked, according to the purists, by the destination of the First Crusade, namely Jerusalem. It was this destination that made it possible to see crusades as pilgrimages and thus grant indulgences to the participants; it also enabled popes to bestow a heavenly blessing on the campaigns or sacralise them, as it were; and furthermore, this destination made it possible to conceive of the crusades as holy wars[5] – religious wars of defence against unbelievers (Muslims). The purists deem that all the main characteristics of a crusade – indulgences, pilgrimage, the sign of the cross, papal blessing, martyrdom, etc. – derived from that original aim for the whole venture: the liberation and defence of the Holy Land. Jean Flori has given the purist definition of crusade: 'The crusade is a holy war aimed at the reconquest of the sacred sites of Jerusalem by the Christians.'[6] All other campaigns that may also have earned papal endorsement and boasted all the main attributes of a crusade are better understood as distortions and abuses of 'the true crusade' and would, according to the purists, be more correctly discussed as mere 'holy wars' or, more specifically, as 'missionary wars' or something else in that vein.

The fundamental shortcoming of the purist approach lies in its attempt to find 'pure forms' in history and discuss their transformation over time in terms of distortions or decline. Undeniably, the crusades of the thirteenth century are neither in essence nor in form identical with the crusades of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. Yet the transformations are backed by the institution that originated the crusades – the papacy. It would therefore seem much more fruitful, as the pluralists insist, to focus on studying the nature of and reasons for the transformations, instead of seeing intermediate developments as abuses of the original idea of crusade.[7]

The pluralists hold that the crusade movement should be analysed as it evolved over time, with the attributes rather than the destination of the crusade held up as its constitutive features.[8] One of the most eminent spokesmen for the pluralist camp, Jonathan Riley-Smith,

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[4] One of the best known representatives of the purist camp is the French historian Jean Flori. See his *Pierre l'Ermite et la première croisade* (Paris: Fayard, 1999); *La guerre sainte. La formation de l'idée de croisade dans l'occident médiéval* (Paris: Aubier, 2001); *Les croisades* (Paris: J.-P. Gisserot, 2001); 'Pour une redéfinition de la croisade', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 47 (2004): 329–50; 'Ideology and Motivations in the First Crusade', in *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, ed. Helen Nicholson (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005), 15–36; *La croix, la tiare et l'épée. La croisade confisquée* (Paris: Payot, 2010); *Les croisades* (Paris: Le Cavalier bleu, 2010); and *Prêcher la croisade (XIe-XIIIe siècle). Communication et propagande* (Paris: Perrin, 2012). See also Alain Demurger, *Croisades et croisés au moyen âge* (Paris: Flammarion, 2006).

[5] On the concept of holy war, see Flori, *La guerre sainte*, passim, and idem, *Guerre sainte, jihad, croisade. Violence et religion dans le christianisme et l'islam* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), 180–240; Thomas Deswarte, 'La "guerre sainte" en occident: expression et signification', in *Famille, violence et christianisation au moyen âge. Mélanges offerts à Michel Rouche*, eds. Martin Aurell and Thomas Deswarte (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005), 331–49; Egon Flaig, '"Heiliger Krieg". Auf der Suche nach einer Typologie', *Historische Zeitschrift* 285 (2007): 265–302.

[6] Flori, 'Pour une redéfinition de la croisade', 349; cf. idem, *La croix, la tiare et l'épée*, 252–65.

[7] See, most recently, Rebecca Rist, *The Papacy and Crusading in Europe, 1198–1245* (London: Continuum, 2009). The author convincingly demonstrates that in the first half of the thirteenth century, the popes still attributed the greatest importance to crusades to the Holy Land, yet found it all the more necessary to expand this model to other areas.

[8] For example, Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986); *The First Crusaders 1095–1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); *What Were the Crusades?* 3rd edn. (San Francisco: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); *The Crusades. A Short History.* 2nd edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); and idem, ed., *The Oxford History of the Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). See also Norman Housley, *The*

has defined the crusade as one form of a papally authorised Christian holy war, regarded by its nature as penitential pilgrimage and waged against both external and internal enemies of Christianity.[9] The pluralist camp therefore identifies three conditions that must be satisfied in order for a campaign to qualify as a crusade. First, it must be a holy – that is, religiously motivated – war waged in the name of Christ and against his enemies. Beyond that, it must be a penitential pilgrimage preceded by taking the relevant pledge and (generally) also the taking of the cross, thereby offering the crusaders benefits in terms of salvation. Thirdly, it must be initiated or at least approved of by the pope. The merging of these three components into a whole can indeed be regarded as one of the reasons behind the success and popularity of the crusades. Through this pluralist prism it is possible to consider the conquest and Christianisation of Livonia, launched at the end of the twelfth century, as a crusade, since it satisfies these three conditions.[10]

The conquest of Livonia and crusade ideology

The eastern coast of the Baltic Sea was by no means an obvious target to choose for a crusade. Neither Christ, nor any of his apostles, nor Christian saints had ever been here. Contemporaries were acutely aware of this deficiency. The anonymous author of the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, for instance, at the end of the thirteenth century wrote that: 'I prefer rather to tell / how God's grace sent / Christianity into many lands / where no apostle had gone.'[11] It proved utterly impossible to think of the Livonian crusade as a pilgrimage to sacred sites as understood by crusading in its initial conception. In like manner, Livonia lacked what might be termed a 'Christian prehistory' which meant that it was far from easy to cast the campaigns as battles in defence of a Christian minority or for recapture of Christian territories (as happened in the Iberian peninsula and the south of France). Yet most contemporary witnesses present the conquest of Livonia in terms of a crusade. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, in his *Chronicle of the Slavs*, Arnold of Lübeck discusses the Livonian campaign in terms of a pilgrimage (*peregrinatio*) and a pilgrim's progress (*iter peregrinationis*),[12] seamlessly joining the campaigns to Jerusalem and to Livonia into one in his narrative: 'And since the expedition or pilgrimage (*profectio sive peregrinatio*) to Jerusalem seemed lacking

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Later Crusades, 1274–1580: From Lyons to Alcazar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Norman Housley, *Fighting for the Cross. Crusading to the Holy Land* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Marcus Bull, 'Crusade and Conquest', in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Christianity in Western Europe c.1100–c.1500*, eds. Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 340–52.

[9] Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, idem, *What Were the Crusades?*, 87; idem, *The Crusades, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 9–10.

[10] The campaigns to the eastern coast of the Baltic were promoted to the status of crusades at a relatively early date, in 1171–2, by Pope Alexander III (1159–81) who, in his bull *Non parum animus*, promised one year's indulgence to everyone who joined the campaign against the pagans there – the Estonians and their neighbours. See Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusade, 1147–1254* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 52–65; idem, 'Alexander III and the Crusades', in *Pope Alexander III (1159–81): the Art of Survival*, eds. Peter D. Clarke and Anne J. Duggan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 355–9.

[11] Leo Meyer, ed., *Livländische Reimchronik* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1876), lines 90–4. English translation by Jerry C. Smith and William Urban, *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* (Bloomington: Research Center for Language and Semiotic Studies, Indiana University, 1977), 2.

[12] For the meaning of the terms *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* in the crusade context, see e.g. Diane Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimages in the Medieval West* (London: J.B. Tauris, 1999), 7–8; Janus Møller Jensen, '*Peregrinatio sive expeditio*: Why the First Crusade was not a Pilgrimage', *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 15 (2003): 126–8.

here, our lord Pope Celestine in support of that work sanctioned that whoever had pledged to go on the said pilgrimage could join that voyage [to Livonia], seen that it was equally agreeable to them, and thereby be granted no less remission of their sins by God.'[13] Nor does Arnold fail to note that the campaigners heading for Livonia were 'marked with the holy sign of the cross' (*signaculo sancte crucis insigniti*).[14] That participants in the Livonian campaign wore the sign of the cross[15] – a central mark of a crusader – is repeatedly confirmed by Henry of Livonia, the most important witness of the Livonian crusade.[16] Furthermore, in his chronicle written in the second half of the 1220s he also introduces the comparison with the crusaders to Jerusalem by asserting that Innocent III (1198–1216) 'in enjoining the Livonian pilgrimage for the plenary remission of sins, made it equal with that to Jerusalem'.[17] No less telling is the association of the Livonian crusade's achievements in the chronicle with the parallel victories in the Fifth Crusade: 'At that same time, indeed, the Christians from the land of Jerusalem had taken Damietta, a city of Egypt. They lived in it and the church of God had victory and triumphs over the pagans everywhere throughout the world, though with us it was not for long.'[18] Henry comparatively consistently describes the participants in the Livonian campaign as *peregrini*, and their army as *milicia peregrinorum*.

    In a more subdued but unambiguous vein, papal letters refer to the conquest of Livonia as a crusade. Innocent III, however, presents a puzzling case, because while his letters of 1199, 1204 and 1215 concerning the Livonian mission do not contain any examples of 'crusade terminology', there are, in contrast, numerous such references in his letters of 1209 and 1210 about the king of Denmark's expedition to the eastern coast of the Baltic.[19] He styles the knights heading for the eastern Baltic 'Christ's warriors' (*milites Christi*) and casts their campaign in terms of a pilgrimage, describing in a letter to Emperor Otto, written in 1209, the whole venture as 'service of Jesus Christ' (*servitium Jesu Christi*).[20] Honorius III (1216–27) followed his

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[13] *ACS*, 214–15 (V.30): 'Et quia profectio sive peregrinatio Iherosolimitana tunc vacare videbatur, ad supplementum huius laboris domnus papa Celestinus indulserat, ut quicunque peregrinationi memorate se vovissent, huic itineri, si tamen ipsis complacuisset, se sociarent, nec minorem peccatorum remissionem a Deo perciperent.'

[14] *ACS*, 214 (V.30).

[15] See James A. Brundage, '*Cruce signari*: the Rite for Taking the Cross in England', *Traditio* 22 (1966): 289–310 (reprinted in idem, *The Crusades, Holy War and Canon Law*, chapter 8); Michael Markowski, '*Crucesignatus*: its Origins and Early Usages', *Journal of Medieval History* 10 (1984): 157–65; Giles Constable, 'The Cross of the Crusaders', in idem, *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century*, 45–91; Walker Reid Cosgrove, '*Crucesignatus*: a Refinement or Merely One More Term Among Many?', in *Crusades: Medieval Worlds in Conflict*, eds. Thomas F. Madden, James L. Naus and Vincent Ryan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 95–107.

[16] *HCL*, 7 (I.12); 9 (II.3); 12 (III.2); 24 (VIII.2); 28 (IX.6); 34 (X.2); 43 (X.13); 57 (XI.9); 74 (XIV.4); 216 (XXX.1); English translations taken from *CHL*. On the crusading terminology of Henry of Livonia, see also Christopher Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 34–5; Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 100.

[17] *HCL*, 12 (III.2); *CHL*, 36.

[18] *HCL*, 176–7 (XXIV.7); *CHL*, 195–6.

[19] See Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 105–11. The letters of Innocent III to King Waldemar II of Denmark did not specify the target of the planned crusading expedition, except that it lay close to Denmark. It may be that the target was meant to be Prussia, not Livonia. I am grateful to I. Fonnesberg-Schmidt for her comments on this point. Further research is needed to explain the change of tone in papal letters to Livonia and to the king of Denmark (it may have depended on the information provided by the local applicants for papal rescripts).

[20] Innocent III, *Regestorum sive epistolarum liber duodecimus*, eds. Jacques-Paul Migne and others. Patrologia Latina cursus completus 216 (Paris: Garnier Fratres, Editores et J.-P. Migne Successores, 1891), cols. 116–17, 117–18 (nos. 103–4). Cf. Cosgrove, '*Crucesignatus*', 104–5.

predecessor's example in his choice of words, describing the Livonian campaigns as the service of Christ and systematically styling participants *peregrini* and *crucesignati*. In a letter to the citizens of Lübeck from 1226, he explains eloquently:

> And even though all crusaders (*crucesignati*) in general stand under the protection of the Apostolic See, we specially receive under our and the Apostolic See's protection those of their number who, no matter where they come from, arrive in the port of Lübeck in order to extend their help to the Holy Land or to the fight against pagans in Livonia and Prussia …[21]

The clearest indication of the association of the crusades to the Holy Land with those to Livonia is given by the temporal and spiritual privileges promised to those who were to undertake the holy campaign against the pagans. As this issue has recently received a thorough treatment,[22] Table 1 presents a concise and simplified record of the spiritual indulgences and temporal protections (legal and property) offered by the popes to participants in the Livonian campaigns. Innocent III deemed the Livonian crusade only partially comparable to the crusades to the Holy Land, the participants of which were usually given full guarantees both as to the remission of sins and protection in this world. Only Honorius III promoted the Livonian crusades to the same level as the crusades to the Holy Land, guaranteeing at least once complete protection of property to participants in the former.[23] Gregory IX (1227–41) continued his predecessor's policies without, however, specifying the crusaders' temporal privileges in his only bull relating to the Livonian crusade.

Conceiving of the conquest and conversion of Livonia as a crusade, albeit not quite equal to the liberation of Jerusalem, its initiators and apologists were faced with the problem of how to justify under the auspices of a crusade the occupation of a region that had not before been a Christian country. In order to do so, they employed a number of legal and rhetorical devices, some of which were destined to have a glorious future ahead of them. These devices are examined here mainly on the basis of contemporary chronicles (*The Chronicle of the Slavs* of Arnold of Lübeck, *The Chronicle of Livonia* of Henry of Livonia and the anonymous *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*) and of papal letters.[24] Differences between narrative and normative sources make it necessary to take into account the disparity between the bolder and more polemical approach of the chronicles and the more reserved and juridically correct stance of the bulls; that said, these two types of source have significant ideological and rhetorical elements in common. For greater clarity, the legal and rhetorical arguments are considered separately, even though they are closely connected by content.

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[21] *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no 92, col. 110: 'Etsi omnes crucesignati generaliter sub apostolicae sedis protectione consistant, specialiter tamen crucesignates, quod ad portum Lubicensem undecunque venire contigerit, sive in terrae sanctae subsidium, sive contra paganos Livoniae ac Pruscie profecturos, sub nostra et apostolicae sedis protectione recepimus …'

[22] Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, passim; Barbara Bombi, *'Novella plantatio fidei'. Missione e crociata del Nord Europa tra la fine del XII e i primi decenni del XIII secolo* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 2007), *passim*.

[23] See Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 133–86; idem, 'Pope Honorius III and Mission and Crusades in the Baltic Region', in *The Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Region*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 103–22.

[24] For a general overview of the main narrative sources for the Livonian crusade, see Stephan Freund and Bernd Schütte, eds., *Die Chronik Arnolds von Lübeck. Neue Wege zu ihrem Verständnis* (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2008), and Tamm, Kaljundi and Selch Jensen, eds., *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*. The best critical discussion of papal letters to Livonia remains Ernst Pitz, *Papstreskript und Kaiserreskript im Mittelalter* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 1971), but see also the recent research of Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt and Barbara Bombi, note 22 above.

Table 1.   Spiritual and temporal privileges offered by the popes to participants in the Livonian crusading campaigns

Papal bull	Plenary spiritual privilege	Partial spiritual privilege	Plenary temporal privilege	Partial temporal privilege
Innocent III, 5 October 1199		+		+
Innocent III, 12 October 1204		+		+
Innocent III, 29 December 1215		+		
Honorius III, 14 February 1217	+			
Honorius III, 21 April 1221	+			
Honorius III, 18 January 1222	+		+	
Gregory IX, 15 February 1236	+			

Sources: *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 12; *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 14; *DD*, 5: no. 61; C. A. Horoy, ed., *Medii ævi bibliotheca patristica seu ejusdem temporis patrologia ab anno MCCXVI usque ad Concilii Tridentini tempora*, vol. 2 (Paris: 1879), no. 220; P. Pressutti, ed., *Regesta Honorii Papae III*, vol. 1 (Rome: ex typographia Vaticana, 1888), no. 3262; K. Rodenberg, ed., *Epistolae saeculi XIII e regestis pontificum Romanorum*. MGH, Epistolae saeculi XIII, vol. 1 (Berlin: Weidmannos, 1883), no. 189; *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 144.

Legal arguments

Although medieval canon law never paid systematic attention to the crusades, scholarly circles did hold a general view that the crusade as a 'just war' (*bellum iustum*) must aim at reconquest and defence rather than conquest and conversion.[25] Not only could a crusade be declared only by a legitimate authority (*auctoritas principis*), it also had to serve a 'just cause' (*causa iusta*) and be inspired by 'rightful intention' (*intentio recta*), to use the terms of Thomas Aquinas.[26] Since the eastern coasts of the Baltic had never formed part of the Christian world, organising crusades into that region called for the construction of a 'legal fiction'.[27] In this, three main components can be identified: the defence of Christians; the return of apostates to Christianity; and the conversion of pagans.

Defence of Christians

A crusade was legitimised primarily by its 'just cause'. Following Roman law, this was understood from the early Middle Ages onwards to consist of the defence of one's state,

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[25] See James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969); Brundage, *Crusades, Holy War and Canon Law, passim*; James Muldoon, 'Crusading and Canon Law', in *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, ed. Nicholson, 37–57; Martin Aurell, *Des chrétiens contre les croisades (XIIe-XIIIe siècle)* (Paris: Fayard, 2013), 32–51.

[26] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*. Editio Romana altera, vol. 3 (Rome: Forzani, 1894), 314 (II^a–II^{ae}, q. 40, a. 1 co.). See Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, 19–20; Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 267–71; Anton Weiler, 'La chrétienté et les autres. La théorie médiévale de la guerre sainte et juste', *Concilium. Revue International de Théologie* 220 (1988): 129–40.

[27] The term 'legal fiction' (*fictio legis*) derives from Roman law and returned to European law in the twelfth century. See, for example, Yan Thomas, '*Fictio legis*: l'empire de la fiction romaine et ses limites médiévales', *Droits* 21 (1995): 17–63; Yan Thomas, 'Les artifices de la vérité en droit commun médiéval', *L'Homme* 175–6 (2005): 113–30.

domains and citizens, or more broadly, of *patria* – signifying in the Christian world defence of the Church, its domains and its members.[28] Ernst Kantorowicz, however, demonstrated how this concept was extended, in the twelfth century and primarily in connection with the crusades, from particular individual churches to the Church in general, which came to be understood as the universal *patria*.[29] Thus, potentially the whole world became one Christian dominion awaiting its legitimate lords and defenders. In this context it is important to remember that the notion of the Holy Land (*terra sancta*) was given new life during the crusades, supplanting the former Promised Land (*terra promissionis*).[30] In this way, the Middle East was transformed into a part of *patria Christi* the reconquest of which for defensive purposes might fit well into the legal and theological framework of 'just war'. This tactic became even more compelling through the fusion of terminology originating in Roman law with inherently feudal legal terms, as demonstrated, for instance, by the crusade sermons: in them, campaigning in the Holy Land is often presented in terms of the recapture and defence of the Lord's patrimony or heritage (*patrimonium* or *hereditas Domini*).[31]

These general shifts in the theological and legal thought of the High Middle Ages created the grounds for justifying the conquest of the eastern coast of the Baltic in terms of protecting Christians and their domains. It was the need of Christians for security that became more popular than all other legal arguments, both in the pope's letters and in the testimony of the chroniclers. This note is struck by Pope Alexander III in his call for a crusade against the Estonians and other pagans in their neighbourhood, issued in 1171 or 1172: 'Our mind is distressed not a little, and tortured with no small bitterness and sorrow, when we hear that the wildness of the Estonians and other pagans of those parts rises up violently and rages furiously and savagely against God's faithful people and the upholders of the Christian faith.'[32] That the argument of protecting Christians on the eastern coast of the Baltic could be used as early as the beginning of the 1170s, reveals its character as legal fiction.

Alexander III's appeal failed to launch a crusade; but when the movement gained new momentum at the end of the twelfth century, the same justification is found articulated by his successors. Innocent III emphasised in almost all of his Livonian letters that the crusade must aim at the defence of missionaries and new converts.[33] In a letter to the Christians of Saxony

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[28] See Russell, *Just War in the Middle Ages*, 20.

[29] Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 232–49.

[30] Tomaž Mastnak, *Crusading Peace: Christendom, the Muslim World, and Western Political Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 119–20. In general, the concept of the 'holy land' emerged in Christianity from the fourth century on: see, for instance, Aryeh Grabois, 'Medieval Pilgrims, the Holy Land and Its Image in European Civilisation', in *The Holy Land in History and Thought: Papers Submitted to the International Conference on the Relations Between the Holy Land and the World Outside It, Johannesburg, 1986*, ed. Moshe Sharon (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 65–79; Peter W.L. Walker, *Holy City, Holy Places? Christian Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); R.A. Markus, 'How on Earth Could Places Become Holy? Origins of the Christian Idea of Holy Places', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 2 (1994): 257–71.

[31] Christoph T. Maier, *Crusade Propaganda and Ideology. Model Sermons for the Preaching of the Cross* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 57.

[32] *LUB*, 1st series: 1, no 5, col. 5: 'Non parum animus noster affligitur et amaritudine non medica et dolore torquetur, cum feritatem Estonum et alterum paganorum illarum partium adversus Dei fideles, et Christiane fidei cultores gravius insurgere et immaniter debacchari audimus, et Christiani nominis impugnare virtutem.' English translation taken from S.J. Allen and Emilie Amt, eds., *The Crusades: a Reader* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2003), 269. See also note 10 above.

[33] See Barbara Bombi, 'Innocent III and the *praedicatio* to the Heathens in Livonia (1198–1204)', in *Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology*, eds. Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen and Kurt Villads Jensen

and Westphalia from October 1199, he expressed concern over the persecution of Christian converts in Livonia and called for an army to be mustered for the 'defence of Christians' there (*ad defensionem Christianorum*).[34] Five years later he still saw defence of the new 'Christian plantation' as the main aim of Livonian crusaders.[35] In a new letter written in December 1215, he called on the Livonian crusaders to 'help them [the newly Christian inhabitants] against the barbarians and to fight for the new plantation of the Christian faith with spiritual as well as material weapons'.[36] Similar arguments, with a reference to Innocent, can be found in the letters of his successors, Honorius III and Gregory IX. In January 1217, for example, when Honorius granted Count Albert of Holstein's request to substitute his pledge of a crusade to the Holy Land for that of one to Livonia, he justified the decision with reference to the dangers that threatened Christians in Livonia.[37] Again, in November 1226, Honorius told the Brethren of the Sword in Livonia that they might keep in their forts 'those crusaders (*peregrini*) who arrive in Livonia to defend or spread the Catholic faith in those parts' ('pro fide catholica defendenda in illis partibus aut dilatanda').[38] When Gregory IX made his only appeal for a crusade to Livonia and its neighbouring areas, in February 1236, he too argued for the campaign mainly from the need to defend Christians and liberate them from pagans.[39]

The same pattern of argument is outlined in Henry's *Chronicle of Livonia*. In Henry's view, a crusade was primarily a war of defence against pagans and schismatics threatening to attack the Christian church: 'The Livonian Church was thus now beset with many tribulations, inasmuch as it was in the midst of many nations and the adjacent Russians, who all took counsel together over ways to destroy it.'[40] He ingeniously played the various local nations off against each other, justifying the campaign against Estonians by the need to defend the converted Livonians and Letts against the attacks of their pagan neighbours in the north.[41] He also argued that the war was necessary in order to restore to the Letts what the Estonians had unjustly taken from them and refused to give back. In a similar vein, the German merchants of Riga and their 'innumerable goods' robbed by Ugaunians were brought into play.[42] Thus, Henry presented the carrying of the crusades into Estonia in light of defending Christians and taking back property that had been stolen, following all the rules required for a war to be 'just'. Describing

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(Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2005), 232–41; Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 92; Bombi, '*Novella plantatio fidei*', 98–101; Cosgrove, '*Crucesignatus*', 105.

[34] *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 12, col. 14. See also Brett E. Whalen, *Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 144.

[35] *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 14, cols. 18–20.

[36] *DD*, 5: no. 61, 'in … auxilium contra barbaras naciones pro plantatione novella fidei christiane tam spiritalibus armis quam materialibus pugnaturi.' See also Barbara Bombi, 'Innocent III and the Origins of the Order of Sword Brothers', in *The Military Orders*. Vol. 3, *History and Heritage*, ed. Victor Mallia-Milanes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 153.

[37] *DD*, 5: no. 101. In 1218, Honorius struck the same tone when supporting a crusade to Prussia: 'Quocirca universitatem vestram rogamus et obsecramus in domino per apostolica vobis scripta mandantes et in remissionem peccaminum iniungentes, quatinus ad defendendum fideles predictos contra barbaras nationes vos accingatis fideliter et devote illuc personaliter profecturi et acturi secundum consilium eorundem episcopi.' Johannes Voigt, ed., *Codex Diplomaticus Prussicus. Urkunden-Sammlung zur ältern Geschichte Preussens aus dem königlichen Geheimen Archiv zu Königsberg, nebst Regesten*, vol. 1 (Königsberg: Bei den Gebrüdern Bornträger, 1836), 5, no 3.

[38] *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 91, col. 198.

[39] *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 144, cols. 183–5.

[40] *HCL*, 78 (XIV.7); *CHL*, 100.

[41] *HCL*, 61–2 (XII.6).

[42] *HCL*, 61 (XII.6); *CHL*, 84. The goods robbed from the German merchants are recalled again by Henry in *HCL*, 72 (XIII.5); 127 (XIX.4).

the meeting of the bishops of Livonia and Estonia with Innocent III at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), he quoted the pope's words to confirm the defensive purpose of the crusade:

> When the council was finished, the pope sent them back joyfully, having renewed their authority to preach and to enlist, for the remission of their sins, pilgrims who would go to Livonia with them to secure the new church against the assaults of the pagans.[43]

Thus, Henry's *Chronicle* depicted the Christian colony in Livonia as *Ecclesia patiens*, besieged by pagans and schismatics, and furthermore internally threatened by apostates, that is the perfidious local tribes that had renounced Christianity.[44] He gratefully invoked God 'because, with so few men and in the midst of pagans, He always maintained his Church'.[45]

Forcing apostates back into the fold

The protection of missionaries and the newly converted is closely linked to another legal argument: the need to force back into the fold those who had deserted it. The Church accepted the use of force against apostates, in the same way that it accepted it against heretics. While the Livonian crusade was being waged, the Fourth Lateran Council decreed, with reference to the Jews, that everyone who had accepted Christian baptism might be 'prevented by all possible means from going back to his former rites' by clerics.[46] In his crusade bull issued in 1197, Pope Celestine III seemed explicitly to emphasise that the Livonian crusade was necessary for compelling apostates back to the faith. This bull – which has not survived – was paraphrased by Henry: 'When the supreme pontiff heard how many had been baptised, he thought that they should not be deserted and decreed that they ought to be forced to observe the faith which they had freely promised.'[47] Henry emphasised this point elsewhere, too, in his justification of the decision of Berthold, bishop of Livonia, to use force because the Livonians 'had returned too often from the faith to paganism'.[48] The treachery of local converts was one of the central motifs of Henry's narrative, legitimising the crusaders' acts. For instance, Henry revealingly linked renunciation of faith with the defiling of burial sites, thus making the forced reconversion of the apostates look doubly justified. He noted that in 1223, during an uprising of the Estonians:

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[43] *HCL*, 132 (XIX.7); *CHL*, 152.

[44] See *HCL*, 18 (VI.4, VII.2); 19 (VIII.1); 43 (X.13); 78 (XIV.7); 112–13 (XVII.1); 132 (XIX.7); 147 (XXII.1). See Linda Kaljundi, 'Waiting for the Barbarians: the Imagery, Dynamics and Functions of the Other in Northern German Missionary Chronicles, 11th – Early 13th Centuries. The *Gestae Hamaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* of Adam of Bremen, *Chronica Slavorum* of Helmold of Bosau, *Chronica Slavorum* of Arnold of Lübeck, and *Chronicon Livoniae* of Henry of Livonia' (MA diss., University of Tartu, 2005), 198.

[45] *HCL*, 43 (X.13); *CHL*, 64.

[46] Giuseppe Alberigo and others, eds., *Les conciles œcumeniques*. Vol. 2, part 1, *Les décrets, Nicée I à Latran V* (Paris: Cerf, 1994), 568 (§ 70): 'statuimus ut tales per praelatos ecclesiarum ab observantia veteris ritus omnimodo compescantur …' See Kenneth Stow, 'Conversion, Apostasy, and Apprehensiveness: Emicho of Flonheim and the Fear of Jews in the Twelfth Century', *Speculum* 76 (2001): 920–1; David Malkiel, 'Jews and Apostates in Medieval Europe – Boundaries Real and Imagined', *Past and Present* 194 (2007): 16–17.

[47] *HCL*, 7 (I.12); *CHL*, 30. See also Barbara Bombi, 'Celestine III and the Conversion of the Heathen on the Baltic Frontier', in *Pope Celestine III (1191–1198): Diplomat and Pastor*, eds. John Doran and Damian J. Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 145–58.

[48] *HCL*, 9 (II.5); *CHL*, 32.

They disinterred the bodies of their dead, who had been buried in cemeteries, and cremated them according to their original pagan custom. They washed themselves, their houses, and their forts with brooms and water, trying thus to erase the sacrament of baptism in their territory.[49]

Drawing on the Bible (Prov. 26:11), Henry figuratively summed up the problem of the apostates as seen by the crusaders:

The crusaders therefore saw the converted Livonians turn away in this manner and, like dogs, go back to their vomit, because they had forgotten the faith which they had formerly received.[50]

Taken together, the defence of the Christians and forcing apostates back to the faith formed convincing arguments which enabled advocates to present and understand the Livonian crusade in the legal framework of the 'just war'.

Conversion of pagans

Originally, the forced conversion of unbelievers to Christianity formed no part of the crusade ideology. Since Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), at the latest, there had been a general principle in the Church that no one was to be forced into Christianity against his or her will.[51] Violent conversion was unequivocally condemned both by Gratian's *Decretum* (*c*.1140) and by later commentators.[52] In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas formulated this principle clearly in his *Summa theologica*: '[Unbelievers] are by no means to be compelled to the faith, in order that they may believe, because to believe depends on the will.'[53]

Yet examples of violent conversion were to be encountered from the eighth century onwards, when Charlemagne, dissatisfied with simply defeating the Saxon tribes, went on to convert them to Christianity by force.[54] From the time of the Second Crusade (1147–9) at the latest, the idea of the conversion of unbelievers (Muslims, Jews and pagans alike) began to take root as a purpose of holy war. The year 1147 was a significant turning point: at the instance of the German princes, with the endorsement of Bernard of Clairvaux and put into effect by Pope Eugenius III, a

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[49] *HCL*, 191 (XXVI.8); *CHL*, 210.

[50] *HCL*, 30 (IX.8); *CHL*, 51; the same figure is used by Henry earlier, see *HCL*, 9 (II.5).

[51] James Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels. The Church and the Non-Christian World, 1250–1550* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 11. See also Elizabeth Siberry, 'Missionaries and Crusaders 1095–1274: Opponents or Allies', in *The Church and War*, ed. W.J. Shiels. Studies in Church History, 20 (Oxford: Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1983), 103–10; Lawrence G. Duggan, '"For Force is Not of God"? Compulsion and Conversion from Yahweh to Charlemagne', in *Varieties of Conversion in the Middle Ages*, ed. James Muldoon (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1997), 49–62.

[52] See Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission. European Approaches Toward the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 73–4; idem, 'Muslim Conversion and Canon Law', in *Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of Medieval Canon Law, Berkeley 1980*, edn. Stephen Kuttner and Kenneth Pennington (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1985), 321–32.

[53] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*. Editio Romana altera, vol. 3, 100–1 (II^a–II^{ae}, q. 10, a. 8 co.): 'Respondeo dicendum quod infidelium quidam sunt qui nunquam susceperunt fidem, sicut Gentiles et Judaei: et tales nullo modo sunt ad fidem compellendi, ut ipsi credant; quia credere voluntatis est.' English translation taken from *The Summa Theologica of St Thomas Aquinas*. 2nd edn. (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1920), available online at www.newadvent.org/summa/index.html (Accessed 20 December 2011). See Patrick Quinn, 'St Thomas Aquinas's Theory of Conversion', in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, eds. Guyda Armstrong and Ian N. Wood (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 274–5.

[54] See Yitzhak Hen, 'Charlemagne's Jihad', *Viator* 37 (2006): 33–51.

crusade was declared against the Wends, a Slavonic tribe inhabiting the southern coast of the Baltic. The crusade bull issued by Eugenius III in April 1147 equated the Wendish crusade with a crusade to Jerusalem, defining its aim as 'going against the Slavs and other pagans living in the north and, with the help of God, subjugating them to the Christian religion' ('et eos Christiane religioni subjugare, Domino auxiliante').[55] The ideological background to the Wendish Crusade is exposed by St Bernard in his letter to the princes and prelates of Saxony, written after the diet of Frankfurt in March 1147: 'A host of Christ was armed against them [the Wends] in Frankfurt and the cross was taken in order either completely to obliterate these tribes, or at least to convert them to the faith' ('ad delendas penitus, aut certe convertendas nationes illas').[56] As scholars have observed, these letters mark another in crusade ideology, giving rise to what, following Helmut Roscher, has sometimes been called 'the missionary crusade' (*Missionskreuzzug*).[57]

If the legal argument that the conversion of pagans was grounds for a crusade was first employed in the middle of the twelfth century, with reference to the southern coast of the Baltic, it acquired a more specific significance and meaning during the conquest of the eastern coast of the Baltic, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. James Brundage has aptly observed that: 'The Livonian crusade was the first significantly successful effort to couple missionary activity with crusading conquest.'[58] While the papal bulls issued by Alexander III and Celestine III endorsing the conquest of the eastern coast of the Baltic had followed Eugenius III in using the conversion of pagans to justify the campaigns,[59] the letters of Pope Innocent III displayed a more complex approach. In *Sicut ecclesiastice religionis*, written in October 1199, Innocent discussed the Livonian crusade in terms of defending Christians. The opening lines of the bull are very revealing: 'As Christian law does not allow that those who are unwilling should be forced to take the faith …'[60] Nor did he advocate forcible conversion in his next letter in support

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[55] Eugenius III, *Epistolae et privilegia*, eds. Jacques-Paul Migne and others. Patrologia Latina cursus completus 180 (Paris: Garnier Fratres, Editores et J.-P. Migne Successores, 1902), col. 1203 (no. 166).
[56] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sancti Bernardi Opera omnia,* vol. 8, *Epistolae*, eds. Jean Leclercq, Charles H. Talbot and Henri Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1977), 432 (no. 457). On the dating of Bernard's letter, see Giles Constable, 'The Second Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries', in idem, *Crusaders and Crusading in the Twelfth Century*, 272, n. 222. On the general background of the letter, see Jean Leclercq, 'L'encyclique de saint Bernard en faveur de la croisade', *Revue Bénédictine* 81 (1971): 282–308; Hans-Dietrich Kahl, 'Die Ableitung des Missionskreuzzugs aus sibyllinischer Eschatologie (Zur Bedeutung Bernhards von Clairvaux für die Zwangschristianiserungprogramme im Ostseeraum)', in *Die Rolle der Ritterorden in der Christianiserung und Kolonialiserung des Ostseegebietes*, ed. Zenon Hubert Nowak. Ordines militares, Colloquia Torunensia Historica 1 (Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikolaja Kopernika w Toruniu, 1983), 129–39; Hans-Dietrich Kahl, 'Crusade Eschatology as Seen by St Bernard in the Years 1146 to 1148', in *The Second Crusade and the Cistercians*, ed. Michael Gervers (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), 35–47.
[57] Helmut Roscher, *Papst Innozenz III. und die Kreuzzüge* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1969), 192–213. See also Helmut Beumann, ed., *Heidenmission und Kreuzzugsgedanke in der deutschen Ostpolitik Mittelalters* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963).
[58] Brundage, 'The Thirteenth-Century Livonian Crusade', 8. See also idem, 'Introduction: Henry of Livonia, the Writer and His Chronicle', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, eds. Tamm, Kaljundi and Selch Jensen, 13–16. Cf. Bernhard Stasiewski, 'Missionsbestrebungen im Ostseeraum im 13. Jahrhundert', in *Der Ostseeraum im Blickfeld der deutschen Geschichte*, ed. Hermann Konrad (Cologne: Böhlau, 1970), 17–37; Riley-Smith, *What Were the Crusades?*, 17; Christopher Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom. Holy War and the Crusades* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 177.
[59] See Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 23–78; Bombi, *'Novella plantatio fidei'*, 47–84.
[60] *DD*, 3: no. 254: 'Sicut ecclesiastice religionis censura compelli non patitur ad credendum inuitos …'; English translation taken from Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 92.

of the Livonian crusade, from 1204.[61] However, in a letter to King Waldemar II of Denmark (1170–1241) in October 1209, in which he lent his support to a crusade to the eastern coast of the Baltic, he used much more vigorous wording to encourage the king 'to root out the error of paganism and spread the bounds of the Christian faith' ('ad extirpandum paganitatis errorem et terminos Christiane fidei dilatandos').[62] Yet in his letter Innocent never refers to the need of protecting Christians or forcing apostates back to the faith, but only to the conversion of those who, 'completely ignoring their maker … show to a creature the reverence they owe their creator and damnably adhere to the worship of idols'.[63] So, too, Innocent's successor Honorius III justified his support for the Livonian (and Prussian) Crusade primarily with the need to protect Christians;[64] yet his letters also signal a clear devotion to missionary work, for instance in the missive to the Livonian Brethren of the Sword in November 1226, where he states the crusaders' purpose is 'to defend or expand in these lands the Catholic faith' ('pro fide catholica defendenda in illis partibus aut dilatanda').[65] At the same time, the phrase reflects well the established notion from the beginning of the thirteenth century that spreading the faith could also be conceived of as self-protection, since it secured the borders of Christendom and guarded the newly converted from the dangers of apostasy. Papal letters often tied together the defence and dissemination of the Christian faith in Livonia, thereby expanding and confirming a new understanding of the missionary dimension of the crusades which in the Holy Land still remained the exception rather than the rule.[66]

Narrative sources underline even more clearly than administrative documents that the conversion of pagans was one of the central arguments for these crusades. *The Chronicle of the Slavs* by Arnold of Lübeck, one of the earliest of these texts, records that the crusaders 'undertook the pilgrimage route [to Livonia] to suppress the strength of the heathens, or rather to subjugate them to the worship of Christ'.[67] Almost the same phrasing is used in Henry of Livonia's chronicle, when he describes the Danes' campaign to Saaremaa in 1206: the crusaders 'were to take vengeance on the pagans and subject the nations to the Christian faith'.[68] Leonid Arbusow has rightly noted that it is the ideology of the furtherance of the faith

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[61] *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 14, cols. 18–20.

[62] *DD*, 4: no. 162. English translation taken from Louise Riley-Smith and Jonathan Riley-Smith, eds., *The Crusades. Idea and Reality, 1095–1274*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), 78 (the letter was issued twice, to different recipients: *DD*, 4: nos. 162–3).

[63] *DD*, 4: no. 162; Riley-Smith and Riley-Smith, eds., *The Crusades. Idea and Reality*, 77.

[64] See Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 136–8.

[65] *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 91, col. 109.

[66] Cf. Antony Leopold, *How to Recover the Holy Land. The Crusade Proposals of the Late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 108: 'There were some examples of forced conversion in the east, as when James of Vitry converted young children after the attack on Mount Tabor and again, after the capture of Damietta. However, this was more common in the Baltic, where conversion was an avowed aim of the crusade.' But see also Lucy-Anne Hunt, '*Excommunicata generatione*: Christian Imagery of Mission and Conversion of the Muslim Other between the First Crusade and the Early Fourteenth Century', *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 8 (1995): 79–153; Jean Flori, 'Première croisade et conversion des "païens"', in *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes (Xe–XVIe siècles): actes du colloque de Conques, octobre 1999*, eds. Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002), 449–57; Svetlana Loutchitskaya, 'L'idée de conversion dans les chroniques de la première croisade', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 45 (2002): 39–53.

[67] *ACS*, 214 (V.30): 'Cuius predicationis instantia nonnulli sublimes et nobiles signaculo sancte crucis insigniti, ad deprimendas gentilium vires, vel potius ad cultum Christi perdomandas, iter peregrinationis arripiunt.'

[68] *HCL*, 43 (X.13). Obviously, the violent conversion of pagans is central also in the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, see for example: 'Many Kurs were killed before the land was conquered, but to break a

and subjugation of the heathens that shapes the narrative of Henry's chronicle.[69] More particularly, the rhetorical construction of Henry's chronicle relies heavily on the term *dilatio*. It makes its first appearance in the opening chapters, in the context of 'spreading (*dilatare*) the name of Christ among the people',[70] and reaches a culmination at the end of the chronicle with the papal legate, William of Modena, observing that the Livonian Church 'had grown so much and so far' ('tanta et in tantum dilatata').[71]

It is important, however, to keep in mind that from the twelfth century onwards, the spreading (*dilatio*) of the faith began to take on an increasingly territorial dimension – the conversion of the pagans simultaneously also meant the expansion of the dominion of Christendom.[72] One of the earliest documented appearances of this new way of thinking dates to the First Crusade, when Pope Urban II wrote to Roger, count of Sicily, about the *dilatio* of the Church of God, preferring this formulation over the traditional term *recuperatio*.[73] It was in Livonia, however, that the conversion of pagans under the pretence of expanding the boundaries of Christendom became one of the central legal arguments in justification of the crusades. If it had been occasionally used earlier, it gained a new dimension on the battlefields on the eastern shores of the Baltic, not only in Livonia, but also in Prussia.

Rhetorical arguments

While legal arguments served mainly to lay the grounds for launching the Livonian crusades, rhetorical arguments were designed primarily to make this campaign attractive and acceptable both to potential participants and future evaluators. Rhetorical plausibility became especially important in the preaching of crusades and in enlisting new participants. A key role in this work, as it is well known, was played by Bishop Albert of Riga who, from his consecration in 1199 onwards, made regular preaching and recruiting tours to north Germany and further afield.[74] Although Henry of Livonia repeatedly praises the efficiency of his work, we unfortunately know nothing about the content of his sermons. Henry also refers both directly and indirectly to several other sermons preached in Livonia, but again the exact content of these is irrecoverably lost.[75] Thus the rhetorical arguments for a Livonian crusade have to be reconstructed mainly from the contemporary chronicles and a few other narrative sources. However, chronicles were written not only to record and perpetuate events, but also to convince a particular audience, whether it be the papal court (the most likely addressee of Henry's chronicle) or the Teutonic Order (the target group of the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*). Alan Murray has even speculated that one of the aims of the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* may

stubborn stone, one has to strike hard. One had to show them both kindness and sternness before they would make the decision to accept baptism, but at last they grudgingly accepted it.' Meyer, ed., *Livländische Reimchronik*, lines 2442–9; Smith and Urban, trans., *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, 34.

[69] Leonid Arbusow, 'Das entlehnte Sprachgut in Heinrichs 'Chronicon Livoniae'. Ein Beitrag zur Sprache mittelalterlicher Chronistik', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 8 (1951): 127–9.

[70] *HCL*, 17 (VI.2); *CHL*, 40.

[71] *HCL*, 208 (XXIX.2); *CHL*, 230.

[72] Christopher Tyerman, *God's War. A New History of the Crusades* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), 914.

[73] See Demurger, *Croisades et les croisés au moyen âge*, 37; Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe. Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), 253.

[74] See Gisela Gnegel-Waitschies, *Bischof Albert von Riga. Ein Bremer Domherr als Kirchenfürst im Osten (1199–1229)* (Hamburg: A.F. Velmede, 1958).

[75] See Carsten Selch Jensen, '*Verbis non verberibus*: the Representation of Sermons in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, eds. Tamm, Kaljundi and Selch Jensen, 179–206.

have been to lure future knights to the crusade.[76] The chroniclers lavished praise on the divine and miraculous nature of the Livonian crusade. Henry admits that he is unable to communicate in words this plethora of wondrous happenings: 'Many and glorious things happened in Livonia at the time when the heathens were converted to the faith of Jesus Christ, which cannot all be written down or recalled to the memory, lest it be wearisome to the readers.'[77] The anonymous author of the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* expresses himself in even grander style: 'If I, for my part, / were to recount all / the wonders which occurred in Livonia, / a wagon would be needed to haul the parchment / on which to record the miracles done by God / for Christians in that land.'[78]

Yet aside from general praise, one of the primary tasks of the crusade propagandists was to work out a rhetoric that would allow for a direct linkage of the Livonian crusades with those to the Holy Land. There are four arguments in this rhetoric which deserve special notice: Livonia as Mary's Land; miracles; martyrs and saints; and relics and sacred shrines.

The sacralisation of Livonia: Mary's Land

One of the greatest challenges facing the promoters of the Livonian crusade was to turn this peripheral area into a worthy destination for pilgrimage or, to use the felicitous expression of Claudio Carpini, the problem was how to sacralise the region.[79] In Livonia, there were two main ways: first, the representation of this region as a new 'promised land', and second – but more importantly – the transformation of this land into the domain of the Mother of God – Mary's Land.

In general terms, each crusade presumed the sacralisation of its destination, since the purpose of a war waged in the name of God could not be mere territorial conquest, but recovery of a sacral domain: 'Objects of crusading aggression were consistently couched in spiritual terms of the recovery of the lands of Christ (Palestine), his mother (Livonia) or his disciples, such as James (Iberia) or Peter (any region extended papal protection or lordship, for example Prussia).'[80] The discussion of Livonia as a *terra sancta* may appear odd from our modern vantage point but, as Christopher Tyerman has put it, 'perhaps precisely because of its extreme incongruity, this concept gained credence'.[81] This logic is better understood with the help of the notion of

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[76] Alan V. Murray, 'The Structure, Genre and Intended Audience of the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*', in *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 250. See also Arno Mentzel-Reuters, 'Bartholomaeus Hoeneke. Ein Historiograph zwischen Überlieferung und Fiktion', in *Geschichtsschreibung im mittelalterlichen Livland*, ed. Matthias Thumser (Berlin: Lit, 2011), 37–49.

[77] *HCL*, 215 (XXIX.9); *CHL*, 237.

[78] Meyer, ed., *Livländische Reimchronik*, lines 2710–15; Smith and Urban, trans., *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, 38.

[79] Carpini, 'La Crociata senza Terrasanta', 186. On the attempts at sacralising the Baltic area, see Carsten Selch Jensen, 'How to Convert a Landscape: Henry of Livonia and the *Chronicon Livoniae*', in *Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. Murray, 151–68; Kurt Villads Jensen, 'Sacralization of the Landscape: Converting Trees and Measuring Land in the Danish Crusades against the Wends', in *Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. Murray, 141–50; Torben Kjersgaard Nielsen, 'The Making of New Cultural Landscapes in the Medieval Baltic', in *Medieval Christianity in the North: New Studies*, eds. Kirsi Salonen, Kurt Villads Jensen and Torstein Jørgensen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 121–53.

[80] Tyerman, *God's War*, 907; cf. Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom*, 155; Christopher Tyerman, 'Expansion and the Crusades', in *A Companion to the Medieval World*, eds. Carol Lansing and Edward D. English (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 462–3; Mastnak, *Crusading Peace*, 164.

[81] Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom*, 176. See also Nicholas Morton, 'The Defence of the Holy Land and the Memory of the Maccabees', *Journal of Medieval History* 36 (2010): 291.

two separate Jerusalems – one terrestrial and the other heavenly – which dated back to the times of Jerome (347–420). This made it possible from the end of the First Crusade to begin a mental 'moving' of Jerusalems to the new crusade destinations.[82] One of the better-known examples of this comes from the so-called Magdeburg charter of 1108, the anonymous author of which calls on the leading men of Westphalia, Lotharingia and Flanders to launch a campaign against the Slavs:

> Sally forth and come, all lovers of Christ and the Church, and prepare yourselves just as did the men of Gaul for the liberation of Jerusalem. The cruelty of the Gentiles has made a servant girl of our Jerusalem (*Hierusalem nostra*), which has been free since her origins.[83]

Writing about the first crusade campaign to Livonia upon the call of Bishop Berthold, Arnold of Lübeck in his *Chronicle of the Slavs* styles Livonia a 'promised land': 'The priests and clerics encouraged the crusaders and promised that if their perseverance is felicitous they will reach the promised land (*ad terram promissionis*).'[84] Livonia as envisioned by Arnold perfectly matches all the expectations held out for a Holy Land, especially as he asserts that there has never been a lack of the preachers of the Christian faith there:

> This land is abundant in many riches, it has never been lacking in servants of Christ and planters of the new church. For this land is fertile in fields, plentiful in pastures, irrigated by rivers, also sufficiently rich in fish and forested with trees.[85]

Such descriptions likening the place to paradise provided a splendid motivation for the conquest of the region.[86]

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, however, the conception of Livonia as the new promised land is supplanted by a notion of it as the realm of the Virgin Mary. Instead of the Son of God, the Mother of God was given pride of place, a move favoured by the era's

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[82] See Friedrich Lotter, 'The Crusading Idea and the Conquest of the Region East of the Elbe', in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, eds. Robert Bartlett and Angus Mackay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 275–6; Ernst-Dieter Hehl, 'War, Peace and the Christian Order', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, part 1, eds. David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 213.

[83] Herbert Helbig and Lorenz Weindirch, eds., *Urkunden und erzählende Quellen zur deutschen Ostsiedlung im Mittelalter*, vol. 1 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), 99, no. 19. English translation taken from Riley-Smith and Riley-Smith, eds., *Crusades. Idea and Reality*, 76. See also Giles Constable, 'The Place of the Magdeburg Charter of 1107/08 in the History of Eastern Germany and of the Crusades', in *Vita Religiosa im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Kaspar Elm zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Franz J. Felten and Nikolas Jaspert (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1999), 283–99; Marian Dygo, 'Crusade and Colonization: Yet another Response to the Magdeburg Charter of 1108 AD', *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 6 (2001): 319–25.

[84] *ACS*, 214 (V.30): 'Nec defuerunt sacerdotes et litterati, suis exhortationibus eos confortantes et ad terram promissionis felici perseverantia eos pertingere promittentes.'

[85] ACS, 213–14 (V.30): 'Et quia idem locus beneficio terre multis bonis exuberat, nunquam ibi defuerunt Christi cultores, et novelle ecclesie plantatores. Est enim eadem terra fertilis agris, abundans pascuis, irrigua fluviis, satis etiam piscosa et arboribus nernorosa.' See also Bernd Ulrich Hucker, 'Zur Frömmigkeit von Livlandpilger und Ordensrittern', in *Die Spiritualität der Ritterorden im Mittelalter*, ed. Zenon Hubert Nowak. Ordines militares – Colloquia Torunensia Historica, 7 (Toruń: Universitas Nicolai Copernici, 1993), 115; Marek Tamm, 'A New World into Old Words: Eastern Baltic Region and the Cultural Geography of Medieval Europe', in *Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. Murray, 20–5.

[86] See Marek Tamm, 'Inventing Livonia: the Name and Fame of a New Christian Colony on the Medieval Baltic Frontier', *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 60 (2011): 186–209.

Marian devotion.[87] As far as we know, Arnold of Lübeck is the first to speak about Livonia as a land dedicated to the Virgin. At the beginning of the chapter dedicated to Livonia in his chronicle, he reports:

> In the year 1186 of the incarnation the venerable Meinhard founded the episcopal see in Livonia that was placed under the patronage of Mary, Blessed Mother of God, in a place that was called Riga.[88]

Yet our main source for the Marianising of Livonia is again Henry's chronicle, where the Virgin figures on almost 40 occasions. In Henry's treatment, Mary constitutes both the central justification of the Livonian mission and the main guarantee of military success.[89] Albert, bishop of Riga, who, as Henry asserts, 'dedicated [in 1201 or 1202] the episcopal cathedral with all of Livonia to Mary, the Blessed Mother of God',[90] clearly emerges in the chronicle as the main promoter of the cult of the Virgin. In the same passage, however, we learn that the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary had already been taken by a convent founded around the end of the 1180s and beginning of 1190s in Üxküll (Latvian: Ikšķile) by Bishop Meinhard. Albert also was the one who, at the Fourth Lateran Council, introduced the new idea of Mary's Land to Pope Innocent III and to the other bishops present: '[A]s you have not ceased to cherish the Holy Land of Jerusalem, the country of the Son …, so also you ought not to abandon Livonia, the land of the Mother …. For the Son loves his Mother and, as he would not care to lose his own land, so, too, he would not care to endanger his Mother's land.' Whereupon the pope, as Henry reports, answered: 'We shall always be careful to help with the paternal solicitude of our zeal the land of the Mother even as the land of the Son.'[91]

The international success of the Marian rhetoric is confirmed by the Cistercian Caesarius of Heisterbach (*c*.1180–*c*.1240) who in his homilies on the birth and childhood of Christ, completed in 1225, presents an edifying story from Livonia, probably heard from Bernard of Lippe (*c*.1140–1224), the former abbot of the monastery of Dünamünde (Latvian: Daugavgrīva), and later bishop of the Semigallians. The story is obviously given from the viewpoint of the German missionaries, since it rebukes King Waldemar II of Denmark for his excessive ambition in seizing the territories held by the Germans, although Livonia 'was liberated from the slavery of the infidels by the blood of German crusaders and dedicated to the Blessed Mother of God, and is therefore called up to the present day Land of the Blessed Virgin' ('beate Dei Genitrici dedicata, nam usque hodie vocatur

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[87] On the flourishing of the cult of Virgin Mary in the thirteenth century see, for example, Dominique Iogna-Prat, Eric Palazzo and Daniel Russo, eds., *Marie: le culte de la vierge dans la société médiévale* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1996); Miri Rubin, *Mother of God. A History of Virgin Mary* (London: Penguin, 2010), 191–282. It is not without interest that in crusade literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Holy Land is often depicted allegorically as the Virgin Mary; see for instance, Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, *A Journey to the Promised Land: Crusading Theology in the 'Historia de profectione Danorum in Hierosolymam' (c.1200)* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2001), 53–6.

[88] *ACS*, 213 (V.30): 'Anno igitur verbi incarnati 1186 fundata est sedes episcopalis in Livonia a venerabili viro Meinnardo, intitulata patrocinio beate Dei genitricis Marie, in loco qui Riga dicitur.'

[89] See Leonid Arbusow, *Liturgie und Geschichtsschreibung im Mittelalter: in ihren Beziehungen erläutert an den Schriften Ottos von Freising (1158), Heinrichs Livlandchronik und den anderen Missionsgeschichten des Bremischen Erzsprengels: Rimberts, Adams von Bremen, Helmolds* (Bonn: L. Röhrscheid, 1951), 61–5; see also Jensen, 'How to Convert a Landscape', 164–8.

[90] *HCL*, 17 (VI.3); *CHL*, 40. The consecration of Livonia to the Virgin was confirmed again in 1257, when Archbishop Albert Suerbeer of Riga in one of his grants mentions the Virgin Mary 'to whom Livonia is especially dedicated' ('cui et ipsa Livonia specialiter est dicata'): *LUB*, 1st series, 1: no. 300, col. 388.

[91] *HCL*, 132 (XIX.7); *CHL*, 152. See also Bombi, *'Novella plantatio fidei'*, 251.

recorded as many as five miracles in his chronicle, plus some miraculous episodes.[98] Three of these miracles took place in Livonia, while the other two were related to the participants of the Livonian crusade. In the first miracle in Livonia, a local convert saw the soul of a Livonian who had been recently baptised and who then died 'carried into heaven by the angels'.[99] On the second occasion, a plank made for the priest Siegfried's coffin was lengthened under the eyes of the converts – 'lengthened not by human but by divine skill'.[100] The third episode communicated the martyrdom of a Christian merchant by an Estonian: 'After this had happened, the wife of the murderer gave birth to a son. This son had upon his body fresh wounds in all the spots in which the father had wounded and slain the innocent man, and the wounds were similar in every way to the wounds of the murdered man.'[101] This last miracle was also described in detail by the *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* which additionally confirmed that a report of what had happened was sent to the Curia in Rome.[102] A miraculous incident involving Bernard of Lippe, communicated by Henry, gave colourful confirmation of the heavenly support extended to the crusaders. This knight, who had previously led a turbulent life, had become lame in both feet, but 'after accepting the cross to go to the land of the Blessed Virgin, his limbs were immediately made firm and his feet became sound.'[103] Henry's message was thus clear: even the lame started to walk in Mary's Land.

The miracles accompanying the Livonian crusade quickly gained broader circulation thanks to Caesarius of Heisterbach who in his widely popular books related on seven occasions the miraculous things that had happened in Livonia or to the Livonian missionaries.[104] These stories primarily served to confirm the accordance of the whole enterprise with divine intentions and, like Henry's stories, they usually quoted new converts or clerics as the main protagonists of or witnesses to the miracles. Taken together, the miracle stories from thirteenth-century Livonia confirmed, as though with one voice, that the crusade and its participants came under heavenly patronage, as required by the doctrine of holy war.[105]

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[98] See Marek Tamm, 'Les miracles en Livonie et en Estonie à l'époque de la christianisation (fin XIIème–début XIIIème siècle)', in *Quotidianum Estonicum. Aspects of Daily Life in Medieval Estonia*, eds. Jüri Kivimäe and Juhan Kreem (Krems: Medium Aevum Quotidianum, 1996), 29–78.

[99] *HCL*, 5 (I.10); *CHL*, 28.

[100] *HCL*, 23 (VII.6); *CHL*, 44.

[101] *HCL*, 181 (XXVI.10); *CHL*, 211.

[102] Meyer, ed., *Livländische Reimchronik*, lines 1269–1332.

[103] *HCL*, 92 (XV.4); *CHL*, 113. On the conversion and miraculous healing of Bernard of Lippe, see most recently Wolfgang Bender, 'Bernhard II. zur Lippe und die Mission in Livland', in *Lippe und Livland. Mittelalterliche Herrschaftsbildung im Zeichen der Rose*, ed. Jutta Prieur (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2008), 148–51.

[104] See Tamm, 'Les miracles en Livonie et en Estonie à l'époque de la christianisation', 36–9, 49–55, 63–8, 70–7; Marek Tamm, 'Livonian Crusade in Cistercian Stories of Early Thirteenth Century', in *A Storm Against the Infidels. Crusading in the Iberian Peninsula and the Baltic Region in the Central Middle Ages*, eds. Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt and Torben K. Nielsen (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming in 2014). See also Lore Wirth-Poelchau, 'Caesarius von Heisterbach über Livland', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 31 (1982): 481–98; Barbara Bombi, 'The Authority of Miracles: Caesarius of Heisterbach and the Livonian Crusade', in *Aspects of Power and Authority in the Middle Ages*, eds. Brenda Bolton and Christine Meek (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 305–25.

[105] The *Livonian Rhymed Chronicle* also tells about miracles accompanying the conversion of Livonia, like the story about Bishop Meinhard's bread supplies which miraculously supplemented themselves: 'He himself suffered great misery from the pain of hunger. / The merchants sent him bread, / but it was too little and he nearly starved. / But then God worked a miracle for him. / His official looked in the stores / and found them well-filled.' Meyer, ed., *Livländische Reimchronik*, lines 463–9; Smith and Urban, trans., *The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle*, 7.

Martyrs and saints

Celestial approval for the Livonian crusade found expression not only in miracles, but also and even more vividly in martyrdom, of which, according to witnesses, there were many examples. Beginning with the First Crusade, the view had begun to spread both in ecclesiastical circles and wider audiences that everyone who perished on crusade, having confessed his sins and taken the cross before the campaign, would inherit the martyr's crown in heaven.[106] The same view was propagated by the chronicles of the Livonian crusade, even though official documents did not recognise any of the Livonian victims as martyrs.[107] Arnold of Lübeck had already woven stories of Livonian martyrdom into his narrative. In addition to the story about Bishop Berthold's posthumous fate, Arnold related an episode concerning the martyrdom of some newly baptised Livonians:

> Some of the new converts were captured by enemies from their own tribe who, luring them with gifts and flattery, tried to call them back to their former error. But seeing that they would not yield to their pressure but were resolved to observe, untainted and persistent, the sacraments of the religion they had received, the capturers murdered them with unbelievable torments. Their unflinching faith braced many in their faith, because many did praise God for them.[108]

The chronicle of Henry of Livonia, however, paid obsessive attention to the martyrs of the Livonian crusade, recording a total of 14 examples of individual and collective martyrdom.[109] On most occasions, Henry gave the names of the victims and specified their social standing and/or ethnic background, thereby enhancing the persuasive power of the stories. All the martyrs described were either clerics, crusaders or converts, mainly Germans – but on three occasions, the martyr's crown was inherited by local converts. As for the precision and brutality of description, Henry's martyrdom scenes were in no way inferior to the greatest

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[106] See Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'Death on the First Crusade', in *The End of Strife. Papers Selected from the Proceedings of the Colloquium of the Commission Internationale d'Histoire Ecclésiastique Comparée held at the University of Durham 2 to 9 September 1981*, ed. David Loades (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1984), 14–31; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, 114–19; Jean Flori, 'Mort et martyre des guerriers vers 1100. L'exemple de la première croisade', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 34 (1991): 121–39; Flori, *La guerre sainte*, 334–43; H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'Martyrdom and the First Crusade', in *Crusade and Settlement: Papers read at the First Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East and presented to R.C. Smail*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985), 46–56; Colin Morris, 'Martyrs and the Field of Battle Before and During the First Crusade', in *Martyrs and Martyrologies. Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Society*, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1993), 93–104; Caroline Smith, 'Martyrdom and Crusading in the Thirteenth Century: Remembering the Dead of Louis IX's Crusades', *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 15 (2003): 189–96; James A. Brundage, 'Voluntary Martyrs and Canon Law. The Case of the First Crusaders', *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 27 (2006): 143–60; John M. Howe, 'Martyrs', in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage*, eds. Larissa J. Taylor and others (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 382–6.

[107] Nevertheless, quite a few papal letters do mention the eternal glory and martyr's crown inherited by the Livonian crusaders; see Cosgrove, '*Crucesignatus*', 105.

[108] *ACS*, 216 (V.30): 'Nam cum quidam neophytorum ab inimicis sue gentis comprehensi fuissent, muneribus, blandimentis ad pristinum errorem eos reinvitare satagebant. Quibus cum nulla ratione consentirent, sed suscepte fidei sacramenta inviolabiliter constantissime observare decrevissent, incredibili tormentorum genere eos trucidabant. Qui sua confessione multos confortabant, quia per eos plurimi Deum glorificabant.'

[109] See Marek Tamm, 'Martyrs and Miracles: Depicting Death in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia', in *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, eds. Tamm, Kaljundi and Selch Jensen, 135–56.

achievements of the chroniclers of the crusades to the Holy Land.[110] When describing a battle between the crusaders and Estonians at the Ümera river, Henry inserted into his narrative a separate story 'On the martyrdom of some Letts on the Ümera river':

> [Estonians] captured about 100 [Latvian fugitives], killed some, and, leading the others back towards the Ümera, tortured them in a cruel martyrdom. Of the 14 of the latter, they roasted some alive, and, after stripping the others of their clothes and making crosses on their backs with their swords, they cut their throats, and thus, we hope, sent them into the heavenly company of the martyrs.[111]

Henry's description of the excruciating death of the Cistercian priest Friedrich at the hands of the men of the island of Oesel (Estonian: Saaremaa) is no less impressive. First, the priest and the Livonians that accompanied him were beaten on the head with clubs, while saying 'Laula! Laula! Pappi!' ('sing, sing, priest'), as Henry reported these Estonian words.

> Afterwards the Oeselians sharpening hard, dry wood, inserted it between the nails and the flesh and tormented every member with the points. They set the wood afire and tortured them cruelly. At last they killed them by hacking with their axes between their shoulders. Beyond any doubt they sent their souls to heaven to the company of the martyrs.[112]

The phrases Henry used to attribute martyrdom to the victims were often unequivocal, convincing the reader that each Christian killed by heathens attains 'eternal life through the martyr's palm'.[113] Or, as he put it even more vividly in another passage, 'Since he was a Christian … we hope that his soul is gladly rejoicing for such a martyrdom in eternal happiness in the company of the holy martyrs.'[114]

The great number of martyrs associated with the Livonian crusade raises the question of the cult of saints in Livonia, another important aspect of the crusade rhetoric. The Catholic Church recognises no Livonian martyrs, neither from before nor after the crusades.[115] In the contemporary chronicles, however, several allusions can be found which suggest that the first bishops of Livonia – Meinhard and Berthold – were regarded as saints, as pointed out by Hermann von Bruiningk in 1903.[116] Arnold of Lübeck's description of the posthumous fate of Berthold's body quite straightforwardly pointed to his potential for sainthood.[117] In this respect, a passage from the chronicle of Henry of Livonia reporting the visit in 1225 of William of Modena to the church of Üxküll, where the bodies of Meinhard and Berthold were buried, also deserves interest. There, according to Henry, the papal legate 'recalled the

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[110] See Silvio Melani, 'Crudeltà rituale, crudeltà strumentale e violenza nelle guerre di inizio secolo XIII per la conquista della Livonia e dell'Estonia', *Settentrione. Rivista di Studi Italo-Finlandesi* 17 (2005): 126–34.

[111] *HCL*, 80 (XIV.8); *CHL*, 102.

[112] *HCL*, 121 (XVIII.8); *CHL*, 141.

[113] *HCL*, 37 (X.7); *CHL*, 58.

[114] *HCL*, 125 (XIX.3); *CHL*, 144.

[115] See Anu Mänd, 'Saint's Cults in Medieval Livonia', in *Clash of Cultures on the Medieval Baltic Frontier*, ed. Murray, 191–223. See also [Wilhelm Heine], 'Hagiologisches aus Alt-Livland. Studien und Analekten zur Geschichte der Heiligenverehrung in Liv-, Est- und Kurland vom Beginn des 13. Jahrhunderts bis auf die Gegenwart von einem Livländer', *Der Katholik: Zeitschrift für katholische Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben* 27 (1903): 306–32, 414–30; 29 (1904): 378–91; 30 (1904): 24–41; 32 (1905): 128–37, 217–30, 282–94.

[116] Hermann von Bruiningk, 'Die Frage der Verehrung der ersten livländischen Bischöfe als Heilige', in *Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Alterthumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands 1902* (Riga, 1903): 3–35.

[117] See note 97 above.

memory of the first holy bishops'.[118] Of course it is not clear how the phrase 'holy bishops' (*sancti episcopi*) should be interpreted, all the more because the phrase also figures in medieval liturgical literature of which Henry made extensive use; however, it is not impossible to read it as a reference to an early, local cult that had evolved around the two first bishops. Such a reading is also supported by the fact that at some unspecified point in time, the remains of Meinhard and Berthold were disinterred and reburied in the cathedral of Riga. Meinhard's new grave was situated in a conspicuous place – in the choir, to the north of the main altar, whereas Berthold was buried in front of the altar of the Holy Cross, also situated near the choir.[119] This *translatio* would hardly have happened had the bishops not been treated, at least to some extent, as though they were saints.

Relics and sacred shrines

The reburial of the bishops takes us to the last major argument employed in the rhetoric of the cause: the role of relics and sacred remains in justifying the Livonian crusade. In the crusades to the Holy Land, relics played a very significant role, giving rise to an 'international industry' which in one operation inspired the newcomers, attested to the justness of the war and offered economic opportunities.[120] A crusade on the periphery of Christendom required different tactics: instead of the *inventio* or discovery of relics, their *translatio* became the aim.[121] Some confirmation of the fact that such tactics were not unknown in the Livonian crusade is provided by narrative sources. One allusion is given by Henry in his chronicle, when he describes the great campaign of 1220 against the Semigallians of Mežotne. After the siege of the fort had been successfully concluded and the Semigallians asked for mercy and agreed to be baptised, the bishop of the Semigallians, Bernard of Lippe, who had accompanied the army, sent 'the sign of the holy cross into the fort'.[122] In all likelihood this 'sign of the holy cross' (*signum crucis sanctae*) can be taken to signify a relic of the True Cross which, as Paul Johansen has speculated, may have been brought to Livonia by Bernard of Lippe himself and perhaps could be the famous relic – or a copy of it – owned by the monastery at Freckenhorst.[123] In some senses the 'Bible written by the hand of the blessed Pope Gregory' sent by Innocent III to Bishop Albert of Livonia, which was an outstanding element to come from the journey of Theoderich, a Cistercian missionary priest in Livonia, and Caupo, the converted Livonian chieftain, to Rome in 1203, can also be

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[118] *HCL*, 212 (XXIX.5); *CHL*, 234.

[119] Bruiningk, 'Die Frage der Verehrung der ersten livländischen Bischöfe als Heilige', 6–9.

[120] Tyerman, *God's War*, 217. See also Brett E. Whalen, 'The Discovery of the Holy Patriarchs: Relics, Ecclesiastical Politics and Sacred History in Twelfth-Century Crusader Palestine', *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 27 (2001): 139–76; Brett E. Whalen, 'Relics: the Holy Land', in *The Crusades: an Encyclopedia*, ed. Alan V. Murray. 4 vols. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 4: 1024–5; Demurger, *Croisade et croisés au moyen âge*, 102.

[121] Cf. Janus Møller Jensen, 'Denmark and the First Crusades. The Impact of Crusade Ideology in Denmark in the First Half of the Twelfth Century', *Nordic Historical Review / Revue d'Histoire Nordique* 4 (2007): 89 (a good example of the use of the relic of the Holy Cross in Denmark, towards the beginning of the twelfth century).

[122] *HCL*, 164 (XXIII.8); *CHL*, 182.

[123] Paul Johansen, 'Lippstadt, Freckenhorst und Fellin in Livland. Werk und Wirkung Bernhards II. zur Lippe im Ostseeraum', in *Westfalen – Hanse – Ostseeraum*, eds. Luise von Winterfeld and others. Veröffentlichung des Provinzialinstituts für Westfälische Landes- und Volkskunde, 1st series, 7 (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1955), 133–48. See also Hucker, 'Zur Frömmigkeit von Livlandpilger und Ordensrittern', 117–18; Bernd Ulrich Hucker, '"Fürst aller Christen Livlands". Bernhard II. und sein Sohn Hermann zur Lippe', in *Lippe und Livland*, ed. Prieur, 178.

interpreted as a relic.[124] For the same year, Henry also notes that upon his return from Germany, Bishop Albert was 'received honorably with relics' (*cum reliquiis*) in Riga.[125] What exactly is meant here by the relics must of course remain an unresolved question. In his *Eight Books of Miracles* of *c*.1225, Caesarius of Heisterbach related a very revealing story about the craving for relics in Livonia. At Easter 1223, in the small town of Hesbaye, in the diocese of Liège, a bishop of Livonia (although his name is not given, this will probably have been Albert) happened to witness how a host hidden in a crack in the wall 10 years earlier had been transformed into a bleeding piece of Christ's body. Fascinated by the miracle, the bishop pleaded with the other clerics 'for permission to bring the host to Livonia in order to strengthen the young faith of its people'. The bishop's plea was not granted; however, he was given two of the three pieces of cloth that had been wrapped around the host, both displaying a drop of blood; the third piece was given to another witness, Dean John of Aachen, to use in preaching the crusade. The miraculous host itself was deposited in the Benedictine monastery of St Trudo.[126] This episode demonstrates that the promoters of the Livonian crusade were well aware of the need for relics in their holy enterprise.

In addition to imported relics, the blood and remains of martyred missionaries and converts augmented the legitimacy of the Livonian *peregrinatio*. According to the apologists of the crusade, the martyrs' blood consecrated the new Christian dominion and enhanced its value as a destination of the holy war. Carsten Selch Jensen has recently summed up this view: 'In the minds of the clerics, no place in Livonia was in itself sacred (in contrast to the beliefs of the local pagan population), but places were *made* sacred (and thus powerful) by the interaction of these holy men who gave their lives as martyrs or became confessors by virtue.'[127] Henry's chronicle offers good examples of this attitude. When writing about the martyrdom of priest John, decapitated and butchered by the Livs, he concluded: 'The lord bishop with his chapter devotedly buried his body and bones, which were collected afterwards by other priests, in the church of Blessed Mary at Riga.'[128] In the preceding chapter, Henry related the martyrdom of two Livonian converts, Kyrian and Layan, who were torn into pieces by their own tribesmen. Again, special treatment was afforded to their remains: 'Their bodies rest in the church of Üxküll and are beside the tombs of the bishops Meinhard and Berthold, of whom the first was a confessor and the second a martyr who, as is related above, was killed by the same Livonians.'[129] The remarkable thing about this description was that it emphasised the burial place of the first bishops, as well as demonstrating how the bodies of converts might be promoted to the status of sacred remains. In this context, one is again reminded of Arnold of Lübeck's description of the miraculous preservation of Bishop Berthold's body – and the fact that, as the chronicler asserts, that episode also culminated in special treatment afforded to the remains of the deceased: 'Therefore he was buried in the town of Riga, with great lamentation and solemn funeral rites.'[130]

Conclusion

The military conquest and the ideological subjection of the eastern coasts of the Baltic took place during the high tide of the crusade movement, at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the

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[124] *HCL*, 21 (VII.3); *CHL*, 43.

[125] *HCL*, 19 (VII.2); *CHL*, 43.

[126] Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Libri VIII miraculorum*, in A. Hilka, ed., *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach*, vol. 3 (Bonn: Hanstein, 1937), 19 (I.1). See Tamm, 'Communicating Crusade', 362–3.

[127] Jensen, 'How to Convert a Landscape', 164.

[128] *HCL*, 37 (X.7); *CHL*, 58.

[129] *HCL*, 36 (X.6); *CHL*, 57.

[130] *ACS*, 215 (V.30): 'Quod cum planctu nimio et exequiis sollempnibus in civitate Riga tumulatum est.'

thirteenth centuries. Thus it is not surprising that a war principally of colonisation and conversion was waged under the auspices of a crusade, as is demonstrated by the testimony of first-hand witnesses. It would be naïve to conclude from this that the main reasons for occupying Livonia were ideological. Although the legal and rhetorical arguments discussed above significantly affected the course of the war, one should certainly not underestimate the economic and political aspects. Henry's chronicle shows how, as early as 1201, Bishop Albert motivated crusaders by enfeoffing them with the lands and forts they had captured.[131] Thus one must agree with earlier authors who have pointed out that although the crusade ideology significantly supported the subjection of Livonia, it cannot be regarded as the initial agency that launched it. As Christopher Tyerman has aptly put it recently: 'In Spain and the Baltic political expansion and settlement drove the crusaders, not, as in the Near East, vice versa … German expansion in the Baltic or the integration of Denmark and Sweden into the polity of western Europe were not dependent on crusade ideology and practice, even if they received important support from them.'[132]

Yet this observation does not necessarily entail the conclusion that the conquest of Livonia constituted an abuse or distortion of the original idea of crusade, as the purist viewpoint would have us believe. In this article I have pointed to the role of the Livonian crusade in the general transformation of crusade rhetoric over the first decades of the thirteenth century. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the eastern coast of the Baltic was probably one of the central theatres of war where the legal and rhetorical arguments were tested that were to shape the face of the crusade movement over the next decades. James Brundage wrote in the same vein in 1972: 'The pattern [of crusading] which developed in Livonia and Estonia continued, with some additions and variations, in Prussia during the next two decades.'[133] Brundage even went so far as to link the pattern of crusading refined during the Livonian crusade with that employed in the conquest of America in the sixteenth century.[134] Although the later reception and use of the justifications worked out during the Livonian crusade require separate study, two aspects of its contribution to general crusade rhetoric may be highlighted: the direct association of crusading with conversion and the widespread sacralisation of non-Christian territory.

Acknowledgements

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[131] *HCL*, 15–16 (V.1); 29 (IX.7); 44 (X.13); 66 (XIII.1). On the administrative policies executed in Livonia during and after the crusade, see Muntis Auns, 'Acquisition of the Acquired. The Establishing of a Real Administration in Livonia', in *Culture Clash or Compromise? The Europeanisation of the Baltic Sea Area 1100–1400 AD: Papers of the XIth Visby Symposium held at Gotland Centre for Baltic Studies, Gotland University College, Visby, October 4th–9th, 1996*, ed. Nils Blomkvist (Visby: Gotland Centre for Baltic Studies, 1998), 259–67.

[132] Tyerman, *God's War*, 652. See also Tyerman, *Fighting for Christendom*, 183; Brundage, *Canon Law and the Crusader*, 136; Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes and the Baltic Crusade*, 11; Anti Selart, *Livland und die Rus' im 13. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007), 41.

[133] Brundage, 'Thirteenth-Century Livonian Crusade', 8.

[134] Brundage, 'Thirteenth-Century Livonian Crusade', 9. Brundage also calls attention (9, n. 27) to the way some Livonian crusade bulls were later, in the second half of the thirteenth century, used in new collections of canon law.

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