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Contrasting Masculinities in the Baltic Crusades
Teutonic Knights and Secular Crusaders at War and Peace in Late Medieval Prussia

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1. Introduction

A crusade was regarded by the church as a form of pilgrimage, and thus – at least for the first century or so of the movement – expeditions directed to the Holy Land included not only men who had enlisted with the aim of fighting, but clerics and other non-combatant men, as well as women and children. The most important element, however, was recruited from the warrior classes of Western Europe: princes, lords, and knights, the latter serving either on their own initiative or in the retinues of greater men. In their lives outwith crusading, such men's masculinity typically found expression in long established behaviours and activities: the protection of family, vassals and other dependents; the defence and acquisition of property; the accumulation of social capital through advantageous marriages, largesse and display; and the impregnation of women and the production of heirs. The exercise of violence was a concomitant and tool of many of these activities, and one of main intentions of Pope Urban II when he inaugurated the crusades at the council of Clermont in 1095 was to channel the destructive violence of the knights away from Christian society and direct it against the enemies of Christendom; the greatest appeal of crusading for the warrior classes was that it allowed them to engage in one of the prime expressions of their identity while still enabling them to gain spiritual reward in the service of the Church. Similarly, the support of indigent crusaders and the hegemonic acquisition of new followers by leaders was fundamental to the dynamic of crusade armies.[1]

However, other expressions of warrior masculinity could not simply be transferred to a crusade environment. While courage was seen as an ideal virtue, writers such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Pope Eugenius III insisted that other typical traits of noble and knightly behaviour and lifestyle were to be avoided. Crusaders were expected to show contrition and humility and dress modestly. Bernard argued that ostentatious displays of clothing, hairstyles and finery were inappropriate to the masculine virtues he expected of crusaders.[2] In the course of the twelfth century crusaders were increasingly expected to show sexual restraint or even chastity. A common complaint in accounts of the First Crusade by chroniclers (who were clearly reflecting the thinking of the clerical leadership) was of sexual excess which, it was thought, had brought divine disfavour on the enterprise, and at various points disciplinary

[1] See, for example: Alan V. Murray, "The Army of Godfrey of Bouillon, 1096–1099: Structure and Dynamics of a Contingent on the First Crusade", *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 70 (1992), 301–29 [reprinted in *Medieval Warfare, 1000–1300*, ed. John France (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 423–52].

[2] Andrew Holt, "Between Warrior and Priest: The Creation of a New Masculine Identity during the Crusades", in *Negotiating Clerical Identities: Priests, Monks and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jennifer D. Thibodeaux (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 185-203 (here 188-93).

measures were promulgated with the aim of reducing sexual immorality.[3] Whether married couples actually abstained from sexual activity for the duration of their vows is, of course, debateable, but the important thing is that for the majority of men from the warrior classes, the question did not arise. Among the princes, barons and knights, few men were accompanied by either wives or daughters. Among these social groups, wives often had the key function of looking after the family lands and rights while their husbands were absent, while unmarried daughters were simply too precious a social resource to be put at risk on a lengthy journey to the East.[4] In the First Crusade most of the high-status women present were the wives of lords who intended to remain in the East and found principalities of their own, such as Elvira, wife of Raymond of Saint-Gilles, and Godevere of Tosny, wife of Baldwin of Boulogne.[5] There were of course other prominent women in later crusades, but they were rare. Some seem to have been moved by piety, like Sibylla of Anjou, who accompanied her husband Thierry, count of Flanders, but in 1159 decided against returning with him to the West and entered the convent of Bethany.[6] However, the negative stories about Eleanor of Aquitaine, who accompanied her husband Louis VII of France on the Second Crusade, are undoubtedly a reflection of clerical disapproval of the presence of women in crusade armies.[7] For the majority of the warrior classes who went unaccompanied by wives, the expectations of chaste behaviour were probably no great hardship since they could resume conjugal relations on their return, while those who had departed without having been married might well return with their prospects for an advantageous marriage enhanced.

The problematic nature of the presence of women on crusades was reflected in measures taken to reduce their number during both Third and Fourth Crusades.[8] Such prohibitions were concerned as much with practical as moral issues, and were intended to reduce numbers of non-combatants who might produce a drain on resources. From 1189-90 almost all expeditions to the East travelled by ship, and the costs of passage were simply too high to give space on ships to anyone but fighting men, squires, artisans and clerics. The change to naval transport meant that women could be physically prevented from joining an expedition, and from this time the only women who accompanied crusades were those of high status, such as consorts of leaders and their female companions, or specialists such as laundresses. Those forms of crusading that were directed against target areas outside the Holy

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[3] Holt, "Between Warrior and Priest", pp. 193-97; James A. Brundage, "Prostitution, Miscegenation and Sexual Purity in 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), pp. 57-65, but see Murray, "Sex, Death and the Problem of Single Women", for criticism of the idea that prostitutes and brothels featured in the First Crusade.

[4] Thérèse De Hemptinne, "Les épouses de croisés et pèlerins flamands aux XIe et XII siècles: L'example des comtesses de Flandre Clémence et Sibylle", in *Autour de la Première Croisade*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996), pp. 83-95.

[5] Other exceptions in the First Crusade were Hawida, wife of the lord Dudo of Cons-la-Grandville, and the anonymous wife of the knight Folbert of Bouillon. See Alan V. Murray, *The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Dynastic History, 1099-1125* (Oxford: Prosopographica & Genealogica, 2000), pp. 191-92, 195-96.

[6] Bodo Hechelhammer, "Die Kreuzfahrerin: Sibylle von Anjou, Gräfin von Flandern (*1110, †1165)", in *Kein Krieg ist heilig: Die Kreuzzüge*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Kotzur (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2004), pp. 229-33.

[7] Bernard Hamilton, "Eleanor of Castile and the Crusading Movement", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10 (1995), 92-103; Michael R. Evans, *Inventing Eleanor: The Medieval and Post-Medieval Image of Eleanor of Aquitaine* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 21-28.

[8] Elizabeth Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading, 1095-1274* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 45-46.

Land, that is in the campaigns in Iberia, in the Baltic region, and in the Balkans and Turkey, were exclusively male activities. It is one of these areas, late medieval Prussia, which forms the subject of this essay.

2. Crusading in Prussia and Lithuania

The Teutonic Order developed from a field hospital founded by German crusaders at the siege of Acre during the Third Crusade. By 1199 this organisation had been transformed into a military religious order on the model of the Templars. While the order's main focus in the thirteenth century remained the defence of the Holy Land, it gradually spread its activities to other parts of the periphery of Christendom. In 1235-36 it was invited by Conrad, duke of Mazovia, to assist in the defence of Christian Poland against attacks from the heathen Prussians, and proceeded to occupy the area known in German as the Kulmerland (around mod. Chełmno, Poland). By 1260 the order had conquered all of the territory inhabited by the Prussian tribes, most of which had at least in name had accepted Christianity along with the rule of the order. After the loss of Acre to the Mamlūks in 1291 the order had transferred its headquarters to Venice, but in 1309 the grand master, Siegfried von Feuchtwangen, moved his residence to the castle of Marienburg (mod. Małbork, Poland), which became the capital of the 'order state' (Ordensstaat) in Prussia. The establishment of a sovereign territory on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea brought the order considerable security and freedom of action; it occurred soon after Philip IV of France had begun the process which led to the destruction of the Order of the Temple, and the Teutonic Brothers must have been aware of the vulnerability of the Templars in France and elsewhere. The move to Prussia also signalled the importance of the order's continuing struggle against the heathen. From the 1280s its main military efforts were directed against a new enemy, the duchy of Lithuania, with the aim of bringing about the conversion of its pagan population to Christianity.[9]

During the conquest of Prussia the Teutonic Order was often assisted by crusaders from Germany and other parts of Western Christendom, but with the establishment of the order state as a base, and the provision of secure land and sea routes, there was a huge increase in the number of crusaders who came to join in the campaigns launched into Lithuanian territory, known in Middle High German (MHG) as reysen. At the time of its greatest strength, the Teutonic Order in Prussia could muster between 800 and a thousand

[9] Klaus Militzer, "From the Holy Land to Prussia: The Teutonic Knights between Emperors and Popes and their Policies until 1309", in *Mendicants, Military Orders and Regionalism in Medieval Europe*, ed. Jürgen Sarnowsky (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 71-81; László Pósán, "Prussian Missions and the Invitation of the Teutonic Order into Kulmerland", in *The Crusades and the Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, ed. Zsolt Hunyadi and József Laszlovszky (Budapest: Central European University, Department of Medieval Studies, 2001), pp. 429-48; Hartmut Boockmann, *Der Deutsche Orden: Zwölf Kapitel aus seiner Geschichte*, 4th edn (Munich: Beck, 1994); Reinhard Wenskus, "Das Ordensland Preußen als Territorialstaat des 14. Jahrhunderts", in *Der deutsche Territorialstaat im 14. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans Patze (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1970), pp. 347-82; William Urban, *The Teutonic Knights: A Military History* (London: Greenhill Books, 2003).

knight brothers, and although it could draw on sergeants as well as secular vassals and hired troops, many of its forces had to be retained to garrison its many fortresses.[10]

The assistance of the Western crusaders, well versed in warfare and providing their own horses, equipment and service personnel, thus represented a considerable augmentation of the order's military forces available to be deployed against Lithuania. This was probably the most socially exclusive form of crusading of any time, in all senses of the word. The guests were almost entirely drawn from the ranks of the nobility and knights, together with their military retainers and servants. They included a few members of the burgess class, but we find none of the independent, popular elements that characterised the early crusades to the Holy Land. Almost all of the non-noble participants were bound by service and hierarchy to the noble crusaders. Most importantly, neither guests nor their retainers seem to have included any women whatsoever. Given that the campaigns in which they took part were organised and directed by a military religious order whose members were sworn to celibacy, the reysen against Lithuania were the most masculine environment of any of the known examples of crusading, in that it drew on two social groups, from which – the one by constitution and the other by temporary circumstance – women were excluded. In what follows I will attempt to establish contrasting models which set out the main characteristics of the masculinity of each group.

3. Monastic Knighthood: The Teutonic Knights

As the Teutonic Order was founded on the model of the Templars, much of its ethos derives from the Templar Rule, as well as from the treatise written in support of the Templars by Bernard of Clairvaux, De laude novae militae (In Praise of the New Knighthood). The central pillars of the order's ideology were the three vows taken by new knight brethren, namely poverty, chastity and obedience.[11] These vows were of course common to most monastic organisations, but the requirements of a military order whose main task was to fight against powerful heathen opponents went far beyond this. Unlike purely monastic orders, its members were obliged to endure suffering, violence and if necessary death at the hands of its enemies. These dangers probably applied more to the conquest of Prussia in the thirteenth century than to any other front and any other period in the order's history. Today we may be impressed by the vast brick and stone fortress at Marienburg, but in the conquest period the typical duty of a knight brother was to serve in the garrison of an isolated timber fort, supported by only a handful of his fellows, sergeants and serving brothers, and outnumbered by Prussian converts whose loyalty was often suspect.

The first extended expression of its ideology must, however, be sought in historical works produced within the order in Prussia itself. The first of these was the Chronica Terrae Prussiae written by Peter of Dusburg, a priest of the order, in 1324/1330 on the orders of the

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[10] The most comprehensive investigation of crusaders to Prussia is Werner Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen des europäischen Adels*, 2 vols (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1989-95). Additional volumes comprising source documents have been promised. For the numbers of knight brethren in the Teutonic Order, see William Urban, *The Samogitian Crusade* (Chicago: Lithuanian Research and Studies Center, 1989), p. 17.

[11] *Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens nach den ältesten Handschriften*, ed. Max Perlbach (Halle an der Saale: Niemeyer, 1890), pp. 29-31.

grand master Werner von Orseln.[12] Dusburg sets out the qualities required by brethren of the order in a chapter of his history entitled 'Of Carnal and Spiritual Arms' (De armis carnalibus et spiritualibus). He gives an allegorical reading of different arms: the shield (scutum), sword (gladius), lance (lancea), buckler (clipeus), hauberk (lorica), bow and quiver (arcus et pharetra), arrow (sagitta), slingshot (funda), staff (baculum) and helmet (galea), each of which is associated with a virtue or quality expected from a member of the order.[13] This is done in an allegorical sense, in which Dusburg draws on biblical examples (primarily from the Old Testament). Thus the staff carried by the young David into battle against the Philistines is identified with the Holy Cross, and the five stones he carried to use in his slingshot are identified with the five wounds of Christ. Dusburg's work was written with a didactic purpose, but it is debateable how much of the fairly complex Bible exegesis would have been accessible to the fighting monks and sergeants to whom such passages were evidently directed; most of the knight brethren and all of the sergeants would have been illiterate and few would have known any Latin beyond short prayers and stock phrases.[14] This was the reason why, within a decade or so, the next grand master, Luder von Braunschweig, ordered a translation into Middle High German verse to be made by another of the order's priests, Nicolaus von Jeroschin. The verse chronicle was still the main vehicle for the writing of history in the German-speaking countries, and the use of the vernacular was not only more accessible to this who did not know Latin, but also facilitated readings of the text to make it accessible to those who did the actual fighting. It is thus evident that it was in the German translation that the history and the religious precepts which accompanied it were made known within the order, and for this reason it is Jeroschin's history which is primarily discussed in what follows.[15]

Jeroschin gives a similar discussion to Dusburg, in which he introduces 'a new form of warfare' fought against the Devil, and instituted by Moses, Judas Macchabaeus and the early martyrs. It is new because it is fought not only with physical, but with spiritual weapons.[16] Its second key component is gedult, that is, endurance, or the need to suffer for the faith.[17] Jeroschin goes on to explain the symbolism of the actual weapons and armour used by the brethren of the order, in which each is linked with an equivalent spiritual value:[18]

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[12] *Petrus de Dusburgk, Chronica Terrae Prussiae*, ed. Jarosław Wenta and Sławomir Wyszomirski, Monumenta Poloniae Historica, n.s. 13 (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2007) [henceforth cited as Dusburg].

[13] Dusburg, pp. 34-45.

[14] Jarosław Wenta, "Der Deutschordenspriester Peter von Dusburg und sein Bemühen um die geistige Bildung der Laienbrüder", in *Selbstbild and Selbstverständnis der geistlichen Ritterorden*, ed. Roman Czaja and Jürgen Sarnowsky (Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika, 2005), pp. 115-26. It is of course possible that the many biblical quotations given by Dusburg in this and similar passages served as the basic material for the order's priests to give sermons in the vernacular.

[15] *Di Kronike von Pruzinlant des Nicolaus von Jeroschin*, ed. Ernst Strehlke (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1861) [henceforth cited as Jeroschin]. An English translation of this work is available as: *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, 1190-1331*, trans. Mary Fischer (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010). Translations given in this essay, however, are by the present author.

[16] Jeroschin, lines: 2174-2182: *an ire strîte ist geleit, / sundir ouch mit undirscheit / in strîte nûwe forme treit, / want nicht alleine mit lîblichin, / sunder ouch mit den geistlîchin / wâpenen wirt ubirwundin / der vîent in manchin stundin, alsô daz gebete ist*.

[17] Jeroschin, lines 2130-2273, especially 2236-2239*: Noch ist ein andir nûwekeit / zu strîtene und vorgeleit / kein der alle sterke vûlt / und dî is genant gedult*.

[18] Jeroschin, lines 2274-3392.

<TABLE 1 HERE>

In this scheme we see the three monastic precepts of obedience, poverty and chastity incorporated along with other Christian virtues, as well as the word of God in a central position. This ideological framework for life within the order was not merely theoretical, since it was buttressed throughout the works of both Dusburg and Jeroschin by numerous anecdotes reflecting conventual life, which directly relate to the three vows or to the other qualities praised by them. Before joining the order, Bertold Brühaven (later commander at Königsberg) thought that 'poverty and obedience were tolerable, but chastity terrified him'. So for a year he slept every night naked alongside a 'gentle, well-brought up young girl whose beauty was unequalled in the region' as a way of testing his ability to remain chaste.[19] Hermann von Lichtenburg 'disciplined his body day and night with many chastisements' and 'wore armour instead of a shirt against his skin', so that on campaign his body was covered in sores as if he had been torn by thorns'. His confessor admonished him but he refused to remove the armour. However, the same night the Virgin Mary appeared to him and with a single touch healed all of his wounds.[20] Brother Ulrich, a Bavarian, was so reckless in battle that the grand master feared for his life; Ulrich's explanation was that it was only through such recklessness that he could hope to receive five wounds like those suffered by Christ.[21] Such examples could be multiplied. Clearly they are meant to have a homiletic and improving character, and there are many admonitory anecdotes of brethren who failed to live up to the order's strictures, ranging from profane language and gluttony to more serious crimes. Werner von Orseln, who commissioned Dusburg's history, was murdered by some of his brethren who resented his measures against indiscipline. Nevertheless, such anecdotes still show how many knight brethren attempted to fulfil the order's precepts or even to go further than what had been surely expected. We can rearrange these virtues to show what was envisaged as making up the new form of warfare which was the raison d'être of the order:

<TABLE 2 HERE>

One could elaborate this model by drawing on additional evidence such as devotional literature and practices. The Virgin Mary occupied the supreme position in the religious ideology of the order, but we also find evidence for the veneration of a wide range of biblical exemplars and saints: Judas Macchabaeus, Judith, George, Barbara, Katherine of Alexandria, Maragret of Antioch, Elizabeth of Thuringia and Dorothea of Montau. It is notable that many of these saints were female, and Helen Nicholson has suggested that they embodied the female virtues of humility, patience and long suffering which correspond to the idea of gedult, which is a key component of Jeroschin's scheme of new warfare.[22]

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[19] Jeroschin, lines 19018-19103.

[20] Jeroschin, lines 13181-13228. Another brother, Engelkin, used up four rusty hauberks in the course of a life of self-discipline: Jeroschin, lines 14071-14092.

[21] Jeroschin, lines 17215-17256.

[22] Helen J. Nicholson, "Saints Venerated in the Military Orders", in *Selbstbild and Selbstverständnis der geistlichen Ritterorden*, pp. 91-113.

4. Secular Chivalry: Western Crusaders

According to the magisterial work of Werner Paravicini, the lay crusaders who travelled to Prussia comprised many hundreds of men from the nobilities of almost every part of Western Christendom: Germany, the Low Countries, England, Scotland, France, Italy and the Iberian kingdoms. A few names of the most prominent known participants can give a sense of the attraction of these campaigns (with dates of their reysen in parentheses): Ottokar II, king of Bohemia (1255-56 and 1267-68); Otto III, margrave of Brandenburg (1266-67); John of Luxembourg, king of Bohemia (1328-29, 1337 and 1344-45); Charles of Luxembourg, later king of Bohemia (1337, 1341 and 1344-45); William, count of Holland (1336-37, 1343-44 and 1344-45); Peter, duke of Bourbon (1344-35); Gaston III Phoebus, count of Foix (1357-58); Jean Le Meingre, known as Boucicaut (1384-85 and 1390-91); John I, duke of Lorraine (1377-78); the knight Geoffrey de Charny (1391); Albrecht III, duke of Austria (1377); Henry, duke of Lancaster (1351-52); Thomas Beauchamp, earl of Warwick (1365-66); Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick (1409); Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland (1390-91); Thomas of Woodstock, earl of Gloucester (1391); and Henry of Lancaster, earl of Derby and later king of England as Henry IV (1390-91 and 1392). To these we could add numerous members of the upper and middle-ranking nobility of Germany, France, England and the Low Countries. The popularity of crusading to Prussia can be seen from the number of those who made repeat journeys, but even these examples were surpassed by the enthusiastic William VI, duke of Jülich, and his son William I, duke of Gelre, who went to Prussia no less than seven times each. Thus in most years of the period concerned, the armies of the Teutonic Order were reinforced by several hundred knights, who with their military retinues added some thousands of fighting men to the forces available for campaigning.[23]

Crusaders in the wars against Lithuania were often envisaged as possessing the same attributes of crusading as those who went to the Holy Land. Thus they were originally often described as 'pilgrims' (Latin peregrini, MHG pilgerîne), a terminology which was well established for crusaders to the Holy Land. Certainly many of them took vows to fight against the heathen. It has been argued that the Teutonic Order had the right to issue indulgences on the basis of perpetual privileges granted by the popes in the thirteenth century, but the evidence for the receipt of these is extremely thin. It would seem that most spiritual privileges were obtained by individual crusaders through correspondence with the pope, rather than as a response to preaching campaigns proclaiming specific indulgences.[24] In fact, for most of the fourteenth century the fame and the appeal of the reysen were so great that it was often unnecessary for the wider church to undertake preaching campaigns to support them, although on occasion the order itself made several specific appeals for assistance. It is noticeable that from the time of the Fourth Crusade, lay crusaders were increasingly influenced by secular values, such as honour and shame, as can be seen in the narratives of Geoffrey de

[23] Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen*, vol. 1: 45-90.

[24] Axel Ehlers, "The Crusade of the Teutonic Knights against Lithuania Reconsidered", in *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier, 1150-1500*, ed. Alan V. Murray (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 21-44.

Villehardouin and Robert de Clari.[25] To judge from the descriptions of crusades to Prussia which may be obtained from narratives, accounts and other sources, by the fourteenth century secular motives and activities seem to have become far more prominent than religious ones. This different motivation may be reflected in a change of nomenclature, by which the crusaders, originally considered as pilgrims, came to be known as 'guests' (Lat. hospites, MHG geste).[26]

One such worldly motivation was the love of women. Most of the men who went on crusade to Prussia were either married or expected to marry according to their rank at some future point in their lives. Yet one of the features that made these wars different from earlier campaigns to the Levant was that they were all-male affairs; we can find no evidence of any women having accompanied them. It is difficult to know why this was so. Women would have been in no greater danger in Prussia than they would have been in the Levant. However, the campaigns against Lithuania, which involved traversing wilderness areas, often in snowy or frozen conditions, presumably did not appeal to women of the noble classes, and having them billeted in Prussian towns while their menfolk were in the field would have been unacceptable on grounds of propriety. This did not mean that the crusaders banished all thought of women while they were away; indeed, there is considerable evidence that they were heavily influenced by notions of the service of ladies which was part of the general cult of chivalry at the time. Thus the German herald and poet Peter Suchenwirt describes the appearance of those who set off with his lord Albrecht III, duke of Austria, in 1377:

> Caps with ostrich feathers were born by many a proud warrior who had joined the company for the sake of pleasure, in the hope of joy and the ardour of love; as signs of favour they had been given gold, silver and jewels; on their bonnets they bore shining pearls large and small, and garlands and jewels all shone in the sun.[27]

This description is doubly significant. It identifies secular love as a motive, in contrast to the pure love of Christ and the Virgin which had characterised earlier crusading (and which still formed a principal component of the ideology of the Teutonic Order); its admiring description of ostentatious finery also contrasts with the earlier stress on spiritual rather than material matters.[28]

There may be some poetic exaggeration here, but the emphasis on wealth undoubtedly reflects the reality of the crusades to Prussia. These were the most socially exclusive form of crusading, but one of the most expensive. Such expeditions could only be undertaken by those

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[25] Natasha Hodgson, "Honour, Shame and the Fourth Crusade", *Journal of Medieval History* 39 (2013), 220-39.
[26] A philological investigation of the term 'guests' in connection with the crusades to Prussia remains a desideratum.
[27] Peter Suchenwirt, "Von Herzog Albrechts Ritterschaft", in *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*: *Die Geschichtsquellen der preußischen Vorzeit*, ed. Theodor Hirsch, Max Töppen and Ernst Strehlke, 5 vols (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1861-74), 2, lines 246-255: *schapel und strauzzenfedern / fürt dâ manig stolzer helt, / der sich zu liebe hêt geselt / durch vreuden trôst, durch minne prûnst: / dem was geschancht in lieber gunst / golt, silber, edelstain; / perlein grôz unde chlain / sach man auf hauben liechtgevar, / chrenz und chlainât offenwar, / daz er gab gegen der sune glast*. [my translation, AVM].
[28] For a more detailed treatment of such secular motivations, see Stefan Vander Elst, "Chivalry, Crusade, and Romance on the Baltic Frontier", *Mediaeval Studies* 73 (2011), 287-328.

who were independently wealthy, whose lords were prepared to support them, or who were prepared to contract substantial debts. Crusaders travelled with extensive retinues, including serving knights, squires and soldiers, as well as an extensive range of support personnel: clerks, heralds, musicians, huntsmen, cooks, grooms, and valets. Costs usually involved the purchase or hire of warhorses, palfreys and packhorses, as well as weapons and armour, and board and lodgings en route and in Prussia itself. Some guests joined the so-called sommer-reyse (summer campaign) fought in August and September, but the majority travelled out in November to join the winter-reyse (winter campaign) which began in February. Crusaders wanted to gain renown in the eyes of their fellows through deeds of valour. Poems and narratives record individuals who were distinguished by being the first to breach the gates or mount the walls of Lithuanian fortresses.[29] However, actual campaigns filled up only part of the time spent in Prussia, and crusaders had to keep themselves and their retinues at Königsberg for several weeks or months before or after the actual periods spent on campaign. These stays naturally involved costs for lodging, food and drink, and servants hired locally.

Some of the most complete accounts which have survived are those relating to expeditions made by Henry, earl of Derby, in 1390-91 and 1392-93. While in Prussia Henry's treasurer and his clerks purchased a huge range of commodities on an almost weekly basis: pork, beef, mutton, and bacon; chickens, capons, pigeons, mallards (usually by the dozen); diverse fresh, smoked and salted fish including pike, salmon, eels, sturgeon, codling, and lampreys; cows to provide milk; beer and mead (by the barrel), wine (by the gallon); white bread, eggs, flour, herbs, salt (by the barrel), vinegar, pepper, mustard, saffron, ginger, verjuice and oil; linseed, grease, alum and resin; candles, glasses, tents, firewood, horse fodder, hay; stirrups, horseshoes, harnesses; pitch, tar, linen, barrels and huge quantities of cloth. In addition, there were payments to diverse local artisans, craftsmen and notaries for organising and carrying out the delivery of many of these commodities and the transport of food and equipment by cart and ship, as well as for such diverse tasks as the cleaning of latrines, the construction of cages for hawks and animals, the painting of heraldic devices, and the hiring of Prussian women to look after captive Lithuanian children.[30]

What made the season especially expensive, however, were the extraordinary expenses incurred in hospitality and entertainment, which was evidently expected of all crusaders of a certain standing. Not all crusaders were as wealthy as Henry of Derby, but many of the lesser nobility and knights could expect to enjoy hospitality and largesse at the expense of the greater men. To maintain honour and status, members of the upper and middle nobility gave several banquets to which they invited not only their own retinues, but guests from among the other crusaders. These events were characterised by competitive extravagance, with the serving of a great deal of meat and fish cooked with spices, alongside expensive, imported wines, and the performance of music and other entertainment either provided by the lord's own musicians or those hired locally. One can also deduce some cruder entertainments from entries in accounts; thus the one of the counts of Holland paid a gulden to

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[29] Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen*, vol. 2: 161-62.

[30] *Expeditions to Prussia and the Holy Land made by Henry Earl of Derby (afterwards King Henry IV) in the Years 1390-1 and 1392-3*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (Westminster: Camden Society, 1894): F. R. H. Du Boulay, "Henry of Derby's Expeditions to Prussia 1390-1 and 1392", in *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack*, ed. F. R. H. Du Boulay and Caroline M. Barron (London: Athlone Press, 1971), pp. 153-72.

a servant named Brabander, whose unique selling point was that he would allow anyone willing to pay for the pleasure to bash him on the head as often as he wanted to.[31] Thus crusaders hardly seem to have suffered privation while in Prussia; indeed, given the opportunities to avail themselves of hospitality, many may well have lived more luxuriously than on their estates at home.

Most of the formalised feasting involved male company only, and contact between crusaders and local women of an appropriate social class seems to have been non-existent. The guests may have availed themselves of prostitutes, but evidence for this is sparse.[32] The paucity of references to women in the accounts of feasts and other entertainments suggests that the majority of guests restrained any sexual desires for the duration of their stays and compensated for the lack of female company with the physical activities of campaigning and hunting, and by indulging in other all-male activities involving ceremonial feasting and drinking, or to use a modern term, male bonding.

The many feasts held over a period of weeks and months were intended to strengthen comradeship and solidarity, particularly across national and linguistic boundaries. We can find reflexes of such ties years later beyond Prussia. Thus Jean Froissart tells of how at the siege of Caen in 1346, two French knights, Raoul de Brienne, count of Guînes, and Jean de Melun, lord of Tancarville, were about to be killed by English bowmen, but were able to surrender to the one-eyed Sir Thomas Holand, whom they recognised as having fought alongside them in Granada and Prussia. Froissart gives other similar examples, and these undoubtedly reflect the reality of a shared chivalric culture which was deepened in the course of both recreation and war.[33]

In addition to the regular feasts, considerable sums were expended on goods and services which might not seem to have been strictly necessary to the pursuit of warfare against the heathen. These included the purchase of fowls to feed hawks, the painting of coats of arms on parchments to be hung outside knights' lodgings, the painting of full length frescoes in the cathedral of Königsberg, and the engraving of plate with guests' coats of arms for presentation as gifts to the order's officers.[34] These expenses point to some of the other recreational activities available, such as hunting, gambling and visiting Marienburg castle, where the guests were received by the officers of the order.

Many of the qualities and aspirations evident in all of these activities can be summed up in a single quality which was the great aristocratic secular virtue of the later Middle Ages: honour. Honour was a personal quality which could derive from ancestry and standing, but equally could be augmented or diminished by the personal actions of an individual as well as by others' opinion and treatment of him. Largesse and conspicuous extravagance, as well as comradeship and valour, were all qualities which could maintain one's honour. A qualitative model of crusader masculinity among the guests can thus be posited as follows:

<TABLE 3 HERE>

[31] Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen*, vol. 1: 294.
[32] The discussion of women at Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen,* vol. 1: 309-10.
[33] Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen*, vol. 1: 310-11.
[34] *Expeditions to Prussia and the Holy Land*, esp. pp. 38- 49 and 67-69.

The absence of women and the conspicuous consumption which characterised the campaigns in Prussia both constituted major differences from the crusades to the Holy Land. In this scheme the extravagance which was poured into feasting and entertainment was one of the principal means by which comradeship was reinforced and deeds of valour were commemorated, in a way that redounded to the reputation of the host and those who had been honoured by him through his hospitality.

5. Contrasting Models of Masculinity

It may be instructive to compare the scheme of virtues propounded by Dusburg and Jeroschin with those which can be extrapolated from the conduct of the guests:

<TABLE 4 HERE>

One could argue that both groups valued comradeship, although this operated quite differently in each case. The brethren were bound to assist each other as members of a vowed corporation from the point that they joined the order. For the guests, comradeship had to be established by means of a series of elaborate rituals in order to prevent national enmities or social distinctions hampering a united Christian struggle against the heathen enemy. Completely lacking on the crusader side is the notion of endurance and suffering for the sake of Christ, which is evident in Jeroschin's thinking but is also present in many of the accounts of the twelfth-century crusades to the Holy Land, for example in the many cases of privation and illness during the crossing of Anatolia during the First and Second Crusades. For the guests, the campaigns against the Lithuanians were largely risk-free, and as we have seen, were accompanied by almost all the comforts of home, with the notable exception of female company; by contrast, in respect of suffering and endurance, the life of the order's knight brethren was thus closer to that of twelfth-century crusaders than that of their contemporary secular guests. Above all, all of the elements of crusading for the guests were underpinned by extravagance and conspicuous consumption, even in the field, in contrast to the sworn poverty of the order's brethren.

One aspect common to both groups was the absence of women, which, however, may have reinforced other secular characteristics. One could mention the religious qualities of faith, good intentions, good works and righteousness on the side of the brethren, but there is actually little to place against these on the part of the guests. Unlike the Holy Land, Prussia was not a pilgrimage centre, with only a few sites that functioned as the foci of devotional activities. The guests in Prussia showed a fairly conventional piety, with visits to Königsberg cathedral and a few other shrine churches and of course attendance at mass; yet there were none of the elaborate religious rituals of the Holy Land that were influenced by a sense of proximity to the sites of biblical events, or the emotional responses brought forth at occasions such as the first sight of Jerusalem from Mountjoy, or the collection of palm branches from the Jordan Valley. Devotional activities were far outweighed by purely secular activities. The main saint revered by the crusaders in Prussia was George, the patron of knighthood. Yet, because he was so popular there were sometimes disputes among different national groups as

to which was to have the honour of carrying St George's banner, as in 1364 when German crusaders insisted that the English should not be allowed to bear it.[35] The crusaders had little curiosity about the actual beliefs of their Lithuanian enemies, whom they identified as 'Saracens', even after the grand duke of Lithuania officially accepted Christianity in 1386. This equation of course flew in the face of what was by now known of the Islamic faith among Christians, but it provided a means for crusaders in Prussia to think of themselves as taking part in a worldwide struggle against the Saracens who occupied the Holy Land, Africa and elsewhere.[36] Occasionally captives, especially children, were brought to the West to be raised as Christians, but the majority of captive Lithuanians seem to have been sold as slaves.

The campaigns in winter and summer were the occasions on which there was greatest contact between knight brethren and guests, but here the crusaders were obliged to accept the military leadership and discipline of the marshal. It is unclear how much social intercourse there was here. The main point of contact outside warfare was the peculiar institution known as the Table of Honour (Ger. Ehrentisch), a prestigious banquet given once per season by the order. It was an all-male gathering, restricted to the order's high officers and around a dozen of the most distinguished crusaders, selected according to the testimony of the heralds present in Prussia. This distinction was not based on any activities in the current campaigns, but on the reputation of crusaders before their arrival in Prussia; this arrangement may well have been to discourage individual acts of valour which might have hampered discipline on campaign. Thus one knight was selected because he had ridden all the way to Palestine to visit the Holy Sepulchre and was famed for additional deeds of valour. The knight judged to be the most distinguished was placed first at the board and was presented with a badge bearing the motto 'honour conquers all', in golden letters.[37] This institution was thus a considerable concession to ideas of honour, especially individual valour, and one might argue, vanity, which went against the entire religious ethos of the order. One wonders whether this was why it was only attended by picked officers, even though notions of honour might have demanded the widest audience possible for the award of such distinctions. It should also be noted that it was one of very few forms of material hospitality provided by the order for its guests.

While honour was one of the principal oils which enabled noble society to function, it was also a fragile quality, which could be harmed or shattered by existing enmities, insults and perceived slights. Such rancour could only have been reinforced by the presence of all-male military retinues of different nationalities, who were present on numerous social occasions in which reputations needed to be maintained, but which also involved the consumption of large amounts of alcohol. On one occasion English knights vandalised some of the wall-paintings of other knights in Königsberg cathedral, but other incidents were far more serious. In 1391 the Scottish knight Sir William Douglas, lord of Nithsdale, entered a church in Königsberg during mass and was recognised by the celebrant – presumably a priest

[35] Wigand von Marburg, "Reimchronik", ed. Thomas Hirsch, in *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, 2: 429-662 (here 544).
[36] Alan V. Murray, "The Saracens of the Baltic: Pagan and Christian Lithuanians in the Perception of English and French Crusaders to Late Medieval Prussia", *Journal of Baltic Studies* 41 (2010), 413-29.
[37] Albert S. Cook, "Beginning the Board in Prussia", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 14 (1915), 375-88; Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen*, vol. 1, pp. 316-29.

of the Teutonic Order – as a Scot who supported the Avignon papacy, in contrast to the order and other nationalities which held to the Roman obedience. Douglas was obliged to leave the church. He blamed an Englishman, Lord Clifford, whom he confronted after the service, and in a resulting brawl Douglas and two other Scots were killed. The conflict escalated into an armed confrontation between Englishmen, Germans and Bohemians on the one hand and Scots and French on the other.[38] The ill-feeling and the danger of violence were so great that it led to the cancellation of the Table of Honour, the central event of the entire season. A ceremony was eventually held in enemy territory during the following campaign, but this was a poor substitute for the peak of the entire season's activities.

The stress on the worldly value of honour is something that is strange to find being held up by a religious order, and indeed it was criticised by contemporaries. In 1415 the Polish enemies of the order brought a dossier of 99 charges against it, in a diplomatic action at the Curia. One of the charges identifies the Table of Honour as having been devised by the vanity of the knight brethren (per dictorum fratrum vanitatem adinvente). After giving a fairly precise description, the indictment goes on to criticise it as a central institution which served only to dupe and impoverish crusaders from the West:

> Knights of diverse standing from all parts of the Christian world, of whom some, as it is said, having sold their own possessions or burdened themselves with debt, came in search of this special honour in great numbers to Prussia and to the said brethren to engage in war, where, while awaiting the reysen among the brethren for one or more months, spent great amounts of money. Thus the said brethren, by their craft and cunning, extract from them gold and silver under the pretence of honesty, that is through intermediary persons for food in exchange for money. This was and is a public and notorious truth.[39]

The Polish criticism accused the Teutonic Order of cupidity and vanity, an argument that was designed to appeal to the Curia, but the crusaders were hardly innocent dupes. However, it does make the point effectively of how far this supposedly religious war was driven by secular motives.

6. Conclusions

In examining the crusades launched from Prussia against the heathen Lithuanians it is by no means straightforward to separate characteristics of masculinity from more general characteristics of monastic or chivalric culture. Yet they involved two essentially all-male

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[38] Paravicini, *Die Preußenreisen*, vol. 1, pp. 315-16.

[39] *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, 3: 619, cited in Cook, "Beginning the Board", p. 377 n. 3: *Quoque ideo ad consequendum specialiter hunc honorem, in magna multitudine diversi status milicia de diversis mundi partibus Christianis, de quibus quando quandoque aliqui, ut a nonnulis asseritur, venditis domi possessionibus propriis, et quandoque in pecuniis obligatis, ad Prussiam et ad dictos fratres pro milicia confluebant, ubi et apud quos fratres quandoque per mensem et per menses exspectando dictas resas, et suas pecunias apud eos expendendo, magnos pecuniarum thesauros ibidem dimittebant. Sicque dicti fratres, hac ipsorum calida astucia et calidate astuta, aurum et argentum taliter ab eis extrahebant, plerumque eciam sub velamine honestatis, videlicet per personas intermedias eisdem pro pecuniis victualia ministrando*. [my translation, A.V.M.].

social groups, whose crusading activity was characterised by celibacy, in the one case permanent, in the other temporary. The knight brethren of the Teutonic Order lived as celibates as part of their vows, and they and their priests were constantly alert to the temptations of the flesh, as is shown by many anecdotes related by Dusburg and Jeroschin. The lay crusaders belonged to classes whose members were expected to marry, produce heirs and be sexually active. The temporary chastity that they accepted while on crusade in Prussia had a different quality to that which was enjoined on earlier crusaders to the Holy land, especially as they did not rein in other activities such as celebration and consumption. Rather, they were willing to accept a period of enforced celibacy in order to enjoy other aspects of masculinity such as the opportunity to fight, to gain honour and indulge in male bonding. Apart from these two forms of more or less voluntary celibacy, the two groups had little in common, and each was obliged to make certain compromises in order to achieve common objectives. The crusaders largely agreed to forego the chance of deeds of individual valour in order for campaigns to function effectively. The order tried to meet the aspirations and sensibilities of its guests by providing an infrastructure and ceremonies which accommodated their notions of honour. The extent to which either group benefited might well be questioned. The order gained a regular supply of heavy cavalry which could be deployed to raid its borderlands, and in doing so probably secured the defence of Prussia by keeping Lithuania on the defensive for over a century; the order also made a considerable profit through the provision of goods and services, and the conspicuous consumption of the guests provided a regular boost to the economy of the Prussian towns. For the crusaders, the Prussian expeditions were undoubtedly popular, as shown by the number of repeated journeys. But they were a huge expense. Booty in the form of captives and livestock can hardly have compensated for the vast outlay involved in equipping expeditions, travelling to Prussia, and above all in indulging in the round of extravagance that was expected of crusaders during their stay. Crusading in Prussia was a relatively risk-free form of military tourism distinguished by little other than conventional piety, which contrasted with the relatively austere conventual life of the knight brethren. The crusades to Prussia so appealed to the senses of honour and chivalry of the secular nobility that they drew off manpower and financial resources which might have been more effectively deployed against the advance of the Ottoman Turks in the Balkans.