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**Rasa Mažeika/Loïc Chollet: Familiar Marvels? French and German Crusaders and Chroniclers Confront Baltic Pagan Religions**

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FAMILIAR MARVELS?

French and German Crusaders and Chroniclers Confront Baltic Pagan Religions\*

To those of us who study a predominantly monotheistic culture such as late medieval Europe, polytheistic pagans can seem the ultimate Other, and such an approach has yielded some fruitful historiographical insights into the Crusades against the pagans of the Baltic area<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, it is our contention in this paper that modern constructions of »otherness« may not be transferable to some of the medieval authors who wrote about these wars. In this we are encouraged by recent work in other areas of history which warns against »rigid notions of otherness« in constructing a paradigm for the surprisingly nuanced discourse of medieval authors writing about other cultures<sup>2</sup>.

When we compare the perception of Baltic pagan religion in some Old French sources and in three Latin chronicles, all written by participants in or apologists for the Baltic Crusades, we see that the clerical authors writing in Latin, like the aristocratic ones writing in French, had little condemnation for paganism *ipso facto*. These chroniclers of course believed that Christianity should replace paganism, but show little of the expected horror even at pagan human sacrifice. The pagan gods may be demons, but this places them within an ordered and familiar view of the world. The chroniclers seek to make sense of the pagan religion, to place it and its practitioners into some familiar category. Pagan enemies are represented not as alien creatures but rather as specific individuals (real or imagined), who may be respected adversaries with specific exotic customs which can even occasionally serve as exemplars for Christians. In these accounts, pagans may be stupid or cunning, cowardly or brave, noble or treacherous, but they are always recognizably human and their religion is a mistake or a demon-induced delusion (such as Christians could also suffer) – or just an exotic detail.

\* Loïc Chollet wrote the discussion of French sources and Rasa Mažeika the discussion of the chronicles of the military orders.

1 Edith FEISTNER, Vom Kampf gegen das Andere: Pruzzen, Litauer und Mongolen in lateinischen und deutschen Texten des Mittelalters, in: Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur 132 (2003), p. 281–294; EAD., Michael NEECKE, Gisela VOLLMAN-PROFE, Krieg im Visier. Biblepik und Chronistik im Deutschen Orden als Modell korporativer Identitätsbildung, Tübingen 2007.

2 Paolo BORSA, Christian HØGEL, Lars Boje MORTENSEN, Elizabeth TYLER, What is Medieval European Literature?, in: Interfaces: A Journal of Medieval European Literatures 1 (2015), p. 16; Nicholas MORTON, Templar and Hospitaller attitudes towards Islam in the Holy Land during the 12th and 13th centuries, in: Levant 47 (2015), p. 316–327.

## Sacred woods and funeral pyres: the Lithuanians' religion seen by French eyes

During the 14th century, travelling to the Baltic shore to support the Teutonic Knights in their fight against the pagan Lithuanians became a kind of fashion among the French as well as English aristocracy<sup>3</sup>. The prestige of the *Reisen* was probably enhanced by the courtly atmosphere displayed by the Teutonic Order, but also by the fact these expeditions were directed against pagans<sup>4</sup>, who in the sources from Western Europe are often called »Saracens«, as were all the non-Christians the crusaders encountered on the margins of Christendom<sup>5</sup>. Another characteristic of the *Reise* was the crossing of the *Wildnis*, a huge expanse of forest and marshes separating Prussia from Lithuania, which must have been an impressive way of starting the expedition<sup>6</sup>. One may imagine that most of the Order's guests were mostly interested in waging a chivalric war against infidels, but the few accounts we have show that the travellers interested enough to have written down their impressions were not only concerned with warlike activities.

When in the middle of the 13th century Western Europe came into closer contact with the Baltic world through the mendicant orders' networks<sup>7</sup>, encyclopaedists as well as popes treated the pagan Balts as ignorant victims of a superstition induced by demons<sup>8</sup>. This notion disappears in the French travellers' testimonies, who describe the locals' religious customs sometimes with details, but rarely characterise their beliefs as idolatry<sup>9</sup>. However, a few elements of Baltic religion found in 13th century

- 3 Werner PARAVICINI, *Die Preußenreisen des europäischen Adels*, 2 vol., Singmaringen 1989–1995.
- 4 Norman HOUSLEY, *The Later Crusades, 1274–1580: from Lyon to Alcazar*, Oxford 1992, p. 399–400.
- 5 Allan V. MURRAY, Saracens of the Baltic: Pagan and Christian Lithuanians in the Perception of English and French Crusaders to Late Medieval Prussia, in: *Journal of Baltic Studies* 41/4 (2010), p. 413–429; Shlomo LOTAN, The Teutonic Knights and their Attitude about Muslims: Saracens in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and in the Baltic Region, in: Cordelia HESS, Jonathan ADAMS (ed.), *Fear and Loathing in the North*, Berlin 2015, p. 324–325; John V. TOLAN, *Les Sarrasins, l'islam dans l'imagination européenne au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2003, p. 186.
- 6 Werner PARAVICINI, *La Prusse et l'Europe occidentale. La participation de la noblesse d'Europe occidentale aux croisades de l'Ordre des Chevaliers Teutoniques contre la Lituanie*, in: *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 1 (1996), p. 188. On the forest as symbolically associated with paganism, Marek TAMM, *Signes d'altérité. La représentation de la Baltique orientale dans le »De proprietatibus rerum« de Barthélemy l'Anglais (vers 1245)*, in: Outi MERISALO (ed.), *Frontiers in the Middle Ages*, Louvain-la-Neuve 2006, p. 161–162; Michel PASTOUREAU, *La forêt occidentale, un univers symbolique*, in: André CHASTEL (ed.), *Le château, la chasse et la forêt*, Bordeaux 1990, p. 83–98.
- 7 Marek TAMM, *Communicating Crusade. Livonian Mission and the Cistercian Network in the Thirteenth Century*, in: *Ajalooline Ajakiri* 3/4 (2009), p. 341–372.
- 8 Rasa MAŽEIKA, *Granting Power to Enemy Gods in the Chronicles of the Baltic Crusades*, in: David ABULAFIA, Nora BEREND (ed.), *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, Aldershot 2002, p. 153–171, here p. 160–161.
- 9 Philippe de Mézières on the Lithuanians: *cest gens sont ydolatres* (Songe du Viel Pelerin, ed. Joël BLANCHARD, Genève 2015, p. 207) and the native Prussians: *veulent laisser en leurs cuers l'ydolatrie et la loy de leurs vieulz anchissours* (ibid., p. 215). The ms. used by G. Cooplund has *veulent laisser en leurs cuers l'ydolatrie et la loy de leur dieux et de leurs vieulx ancesseurs*, *Le Songe du Vieil Pelerin*, ed. George W. COOPLAND, vol. 1, Cambridge 1969, p. 241.

encyclopaedists are also mentioned by our travellers. For example, in his »Bonum universale de apibus«, Thomas de Cantimpré explains that »until now, the infidels of Prussia honour the sacred woods and do not dare to notch them, nor to penetrate through them, except if they wish to make sacrifice to their gods«<sup>10</sup>. For the author of the said »Messin chronicle«, who probably took part in the *Reise* he describes<sup>11</sup>, the pagan Samogitians' sacred grove even appears to be their last refuge, where they tried to flee before the crusader's onslaught: »When they felt the strength of the Christians, they fled to a marvellous wood which they called the Sacred Wood, where no Christian had ever been; when they felt pressed, they always escaped to this wood«<sup>12</sup>. The sacred woods have been mentioned by at least two other French authors, the chronicler Jean Cabaret d'Orville and the traveller Guillebert de Lannoy; interestingly enough, both link the pagans' holy groves to cremation of the dead<sup>13</sup>.

These descriptions lead us to the element which came most easily when French authors wrote about the Baltic customs: the funeral pyre, which was most probably used for the funerary rites of the Lithuanian nobles in the 13th-14th centuries<sup>14</sup>. The most impressive account of such a ceremony is to be found in »Le Songe du Viel Pelerin«, the work of Philippe de Mézières, who describes Prussia and Lithuania after the memories of his own travel to the *Ordensstaat* as an ambassador of the King of Cyprus, in 1364<sup>15</sup>:

- 10 *His adhuc Prussiae gentiles silvas aestimant consecratas, & eas incidere non audentes, nunquam ingrediuntur easdem, nisi cum in eis dijs suis voluerint immolare*, L. 2, chap. 57, ed. G. COLVEN-ERIUS, Douai 1627, p. 548; Wilhelm MANNHARDT, *Letto-Preussische Götterlehre*, Riga 1936, p. 48–49. The use of sacred groves by the Baltic pagans is discussed by Stephen C. ROWELL, *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire within East-Central Europe, 1295–1345*, Cambridge 1994, p. 120–122.
- 11 *Die Metzger Chronik des Jaïque Dex (Jacques d'Esch) über die Kaiser und Könige aus dem Luxemburger Hause*, ed. Georg WOLFRAM, Metz 1906, p. LXXIII, 336. The author of the chronicle is thought to be Jacques d'Esch, a member of the Messin aristocracy.
- 12 *Maix quant ilz sentont la force desdis Crestiens, ilz recullont arrier et s'en allont fuiant en ung merveilleux bois, qu'ilz appelloient le Saint Boix, ou onque Crestien n'avoit esteit, et onqueil boix, quant ilz se sentient constrains, ilz s'i alloient aitez salver*, ed. WOLFRAM (as in n. 11), p. 337.
- 13 *Les saints bois (que ainsi ils appellent) des pins, ou ils consumoient les corps de leurs morts par feu et en faisoient sacrifier*, Jean Cabaret d'Orville, *Chronique du bon duc Loys de Bourbon*, ed. Alphonse-Martial CHAZAUD, Paris 1876, p. 65; [...] *ont lesdis Corres, [...] une secte que après leur mort ilz se font ardoir en lieu de sépulture, vestus et aournez chacun de leurs meilleurs aournements en ung leur plus prochain bois ou forest qu'ilz ont, en feu fait de purain bois de chesne*, Œuvres de Guillebert de Lannoy, ed. Charles POTVIN, Louvain 1878, p. 30.
- 14 Marek TAMM, *A New World into Old Words: The Eastern Baltic Region and the Cultural Geography of Medieval Europe*, in: Allan V. MURRAY (ed.), *The Clash of Cultures on the Baltic Frontier*, Farnham 2009, p. 30–31. On archeological finds, Eglė BAZARAITE, Teresa HEITOR, *Comparative Study of Christian and Pagan Burial Constructions*, in: *Mosklas – Lietuvos Ateitis* 5/3 (2013), p. 316–321; ROWELL, *Lithuania Ascending* (as in n. 10), p. 128–130.
- 15 On Philippe de Mézières in Prussia, see Werner PARAVICINI, *Litauer: vom heidnischen Gegner zum adligen Standesgenossen*, in: ID., Rimvydas PETRAUSKAS, Grisca VERCAMER (ed.), *Tannenberg – Grunwald – Žalgiris 1410*, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 258–259; Stephen C. ROWELL, *Of Men and Monsters: Sources for the History of Lithuania in the Time of Gediminas*, in: *Journal of Baltic Studies* 24 (1993), p. 93; ID., *Lithuania Ascending* (as in n. 10), p. 130–131; Sylvain GOUGUENHEIM, *Les Chevaliers Teutoniques*, Paris 2007, p. 586; S. JÓZWIĄK, J. TRUPINDA, *Organizacja życia na zamku krzyżackim w Malborku w czasach wielkich mistrzów (1309–1457)*, *Malbork 2011*, p. 214–215; M. GŁOBEK, *Utopia Europy zjednoczonej. Życia i idee Filipa de Mézières*

»When their king is dead, his barons arm him with all his weapons, and install him on a beautiful horse, well equipped with his weapons, and around the King they assemble fir trees, as one does for a bird's cage. And the barons elect the best friend the King had, and present him this honour, which consists in keeping company to his lord, who loved him so much, be burned with him and go to heaven. The aforementioned friend considers himself greatly honoured to keep his lord company for eternity, and on his own initiative, takes up a position in the wooden cage, near the dead king his lord, who is seated on his living horse. Then, the barons with great devotion, orisons and regrets put the cage on fire, and burn their king and his good friend. And the souls later go to a heaven arranged for such people<sup>16</sup>.«

When mentioning »that the souls later go to a heaven [*en Paradis*] arranged for such people«, Mézières probably did not intend to mean that the Lithuanian noblemen had access to Christ's followers' heaven<sup>17</sup>. The use of *Paradis* as a resting place for pagan deities is attested in the »Roman de la Rose«<sup>18</sup> and this meaning is more or less the same in Antoine de la Salle's novel »Le Paradis de la Reine Sybille«, written a few decades after Mézières's work (a. 1442–1444)<sup>19</sup>; our author probably meant a similar idea by *Paradis*. Nonetheless, by reading the passage mentioning the Lithuanian Kings' funeral rites, one could hardly find disgust or abuse; on the contrary, the neutral tone shows curiosity, maybe even a hint of respect for the King's friend who accepts with joy to follow his lord in death. One gets the feeling that our French writer is trying to figure out what the beliefs of the Lithuanians may have been, so to say, to understand why they practised such a strange custom. Trying to explain the Baltic funerary rituals by the belief in another world after death was also a feature of mid-13th encyclopaedia of Bartholomeus Anglicus »De proprietatibus rerum«<sup>20</sup>.

(1327–1405), Slupsk 1997, p. 80–81; V. KIPARSKY, Philippe de Mézières sur les rives de la Baltique, in: Neuphilologische Mitteilungen 41/3–4 (1940), p. 61–67; Juozas JAKŠTAS, Das Balticum in der Kreuzzugsbewegung des 14. Jhs. Die Nachrichten Philipps de Mézières über die baltischen Gebiete, in: Commentationes Balticae 6–7/3 (1959), p. 141–183.

- 16 *Et quant leur roy est mort ses barons l'arment de toutes ses armes, et le metent sus un biau cheval bien armé de ses armes et entour le roy mort il font une grant assamblee de sapins composee en maniere que on fait les mesengiers, et par election les barons prennent le plus grant ami que le roy avoit, et li presentent cest honnour, c'est assavoir qu'il doye tenir compaignie a son seigneur qui tant l'ama et estre ars avec lui et aler en Paradis. Ledit amy se tient pour honnouré a toujours maiz de tenir compaignie a son seigneur et de sa propre volenté se met dedans le mesengier de bois emprés du roy son seigneur mort, qui est assis sus son cheval tout vif. Et lors les barons a grant devotion et a grans oroisons et regrés bontent le feu oudict mesengier de bois et ardent leur roy et son bon amy. Et les ames s'en vont tantost en Paradis ordené a telz gens*, Songe du Viel Pelerin, ed. BLANCHARD (as in n. 9), p. 207.
- 17 Jeffrey B. RUSSELL, *A History of Heaven. The Singing Silence*, Princetown 1997, p. 128–129, notes that during the 12th century, the idea that a virtuous pagan may exceptionally be saved by a miracle and access to heaven developed, among literary field more than theology.
- 18 Alain REY (ed.), *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, vol. 2, Paris 1992, p. 1422; Adolf TOBLER, Erhard LOMMATZSCH (ed.), *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 7, Berlin 1969, p. 192.
- 19 Cf. Antoine de la Salle, *Il Paradiso della Regina Sibilla*, ed. and trad. Patrizia ROMAGNOLI, Verbania 2001.
- 20 *Credentes sic incensos ad quartam [quandam] viuorum regionem feliciter pertingere*, l. 15, cap. 88, De Liunia, quoted by TAMM, *Les signes d'altérité* (as in n. 8), p. 169; *ibid.*, p. 164–165.

The knight Guillebert de Lannoy does nothing different when in his travel accounts he describes the habits of the inhabitants of Kurland which he crossed on his way from Prussia to Riga<sup>21</sup>. Interestingly enough, this aristocrat who sailed from Northern France in 1413 to take part in one of the last crusades against local »unbelievers«<sup>22</sup> gives a quite accurate account of the people living in the region he travelled through, being able to distinguish between the »Semigallians, the Kurs and the Livs, who each have their own language«<sup>23</sup>. Guillebert goes on reporting a comment he possibly heard from his local guides<sup>24</sup>:

»Although they are native Christians through force<sup>25</sup>, the Kurs have a doctrine [secte] that after their death instead of receiving a proper burial, each dressed and adorned with their best adornment in one of the closest woods or forests they have, they are burned in a fire only made of oaken wood. And they believe that if the smoke goes straight to the sky the soul is saved, but if it is blown laterally the soul is lost<sup>26</sup>.«

For the last sentence, our travelling knight is relying on the medieval legend of the smoke of Cain's and Abel's sacrifices, indicating whether it has been accepted or rejected by God<sup>27</sup>. While less spectacular than Mézières' account, this observation also

21 Guillebert de Lannoy travelled in the Baltic area in 1413–1414 as a crusader and individual traveler, and in 1421 as an ambassador for Duke Philippe of Burgundy. The notes of his travels has been collected after his death by his chaplain under the title »Voyages et ambassades«; Jaroslav SVÁTEK, *Discours et récit de noble voyageur à la fin du Moyen Âge (Ogier d'Anglure, Nompar de Caumont, Guillebert de Lannoy, Bertrandon de la Broquière)*, Lille, Prague 2012 (thèse non publiée), p. 42–62; Martin NEJEDLÝ, *Spisy středověkých cestovatelů jako podnět k »poutím mimo vyšlapané stezky«*, in: Guillebert de Lannoy, *Cesty a poselstva*, ed. Jaroslav SVÁTEK, Martin NEJEDLÝ, Olivier MARIN, Pavel SOUKUP, Prague 2009, p. 112. On his travel to the Baltic area, see SVÁTEK, *Discours*, p. 231–233, 262–265; Anne BERTRAND, *Un seigneur bourguignon en Europe de l'Est: Guillebert de Lannoy (1386–1462)*, in: *Le Moyen Âge* 95/2 (1989), p. 293–309; Oskar HALECKI, *Gilbert de Lannoy and his Discovery of East Central Europe*, in: *Bulletin of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America* 2 (1944), p. 314–331; Petras KLIMAS, *Guillebert de Lannoy in medieval Lithuania: voyages and embassies of an ancestor of one of America's great presidents*, New York 1945.

22 *mescréans*, Guillebert de Lannoy, ed. POTVIN (as in n. 13), p. 20.

23 [...] *des Zamegaelz, des Corres et des Lives, lesquelz ont chascun ung langaige à part eulz*, *ibid.*, p. 29–30; SVÁTEK, *Discours* (as in n. 17), p. 373.

24 Referring to another trip across the Order's lands, one can deduce that Guillebert used his guides as informers from whom he picked up the stories in his travel account. After visiting a Prussian commandry, he writes *Et de là, je fus mené sur le rivière de la Wisle* (Guillebert de Lannoy, ed. POTVIN [as in n. 13], p. 46), and then gives the story about the foundation of Toruń around an oak-tree. One may suppose this was told to him by the guide who led him to this place.

25 The ms. of de Lannoy family do not contain the words *natifs par force*; *ibid.*, p. 30, n. 4.

26 *Idem, ont lesdis Corres, jasoit ce qu'ilz soient cristiens natifz par force une secte que après leur mort ilz se font ardoir en lieu de sépulture, vestus et aournez chascun de leurs meilleurs aourmens en ung leur plus prochain bois ou forest qu'ilz ont, en feu fait de purain bois de quesne. Et croyent, se la fumière va droit ou ciel, que l'âme est sauvée, mais, s'elle va soufflant de costé, que l'âme est périe*; *ibid.*, p. 30.

27 Norbertas VĖLIUS (ed.), *Baltų Religijos ir Mitologijos Šaltiniai*, Vilnius 1996, p. 513; Alexander SCHEIBER, *La fumée des offrandes de Caïn et d'Abel. Historique d'une légende*, in: *Revue des Études Juives*, nouv. série 15 (115) (1956), p. 9–24.

shows an effort to make sense of the amazing practice of burning the dead, which is described with a neutral tone, with few traces of condemnation (only the use of the word *secte* may be charged pejoratively<sup>28</sup>).

The cremation of the deceased, which is also used in literature when dealing with Antiquity's pagans<sup>29</sup>, seems to have become a *topos* attached to the Lithuanians. In Jean d'Arras' prose novel »Mélusine« (1393) we find a character who may well be a Lithuanian duke<sup>30</sup>: Selodus, *roy de Craco* [Cracow], an evil leader of »Saracens«<sup>31</sup>. By relying on the Lusignan's legend of origin and their supposed familial relationship to the Luxembourg, the author intended to glorify his patron Jean de Berry's ancestors<sup>32</sup>, among whom the most famous was probably John the Blind, the King of Bohemia who went on a *Reise* in 1329. While the memory of King John's war against Lithuanians probably provided a good template to the author<sup>33</sup>, one may think the contemporary turmoil occurring between the Teutonic Order and Poland's King Jagiello, a convert of Lithuanian origin, could have been mixed in to draw the picture of a Lithuanian arch-villain<sup>34</sup>. After all, the early 1390s was the peak of French participation in the wars in the Baltic area<sup>35</sup>, so one may infer that the author of the novel had heard about the Order's accusations from some knights coming back from Prussia. The oral transmission of tales from far-away lands and the exaggeration of their content seems to have been so common that the theologian and moralist Jean Petit (d. 1411) even felt obliged to remind the returned crusader to tell the sole truth about

28 *Secte* is used by Guillebert in regard of the Muslims: SVÁTEK, Discours (as in n. 21), p. 403.

29 Cf. Dydo's death on a pyre; Le Roman d'Éneas, ed. and trans. Aimé PETIT, Paris 1997, p. 166–173.

30 In proposing a Lithuanian inspiration for Jean d'Arras' East-Central European »Saracens«, we must keep in mind that it is inappropriate to try identifying the fictional character Selodus with a unique historical figure; Martin NEJEDLÝ, »Comment le roy Selodus fist ardoir le corps du roy Fedric de Bahaigne devan la porte de Prange«. Les Tchèques et la croisade contre les Sarrasins dans »Mélusine« de Jean d'Arras (vers 1393), in: Martin NEJEDLÝ, Jaroslav SVÁTEK (ed.), Histories et mémoires des croisades à la fin du Moyen Âge, Toulouse 2012, p. 266.

31 The besiegers are called *payens et Sarrasins* (Jean d'Arras, *Mélusine ou la noble histoire de Lusignan*, ed. and trans. Jean-Jacques VINCENSINI, Paris 2003, p. 496 and *passim*). In the verse poem by Coudrette (1401), the men of the unnamed roy de Craquo are *Esclavons* (v. 2299), *Sarrasins* (v. 2313 and *passim*) and *payens* (v. 2352) (Coudrette, *Mélusine* [Roman de Parthenay ou Roman de Lusignan], ed. and trans. Matthew W. MORRIS, Jean-Jacques VINCENSINI, Lewiston 2009, p. 204–208). The variant chosen by E. Roach (Coudrette, *Le Roman de Mélusine ou Histoire de Lusignan*, ed. Eleanor ROACH, Paris 1982, p. 191, v. 2475 and *passim*) has *roy de Traquo* (v. 2475).

32 Jean d'Arras, ed. VINCENSINI (as in n. 31), p. 22–23.

33 Marie-Thérèse DE MEDEIROS, L'Idée de croisade dans la »Mélusine« de Jean d'Arras, in: Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes 1 (1996), p. 149. King John's *Reise* features in Guillaume de Machaut's *Le Confort d'Ami*: *Œuvres de Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. Ernest HOEFFNER, vol. 3, Paris 1921, p. 107–108.

34 On the Teutonic accusations against King Jagiello and their doubts on the conversion of Lithuania, see Grzegorz BŁASZCZYK, *Dzieje Stosunków POLSKICH-LITEWSKICH*, vol. 2: *Od Krewa do Lublina*, Poznań 2007, p. 444–445; Rimvydas PETRAUSKAS, *Litauen und der Deutsche Orden: Vom Feind zum Verbündeten*, in: PARAVICINI, PETRAUSKAS, VERCAMER (éd.), *Tannenberg* (as in n. 15), p. 243–244.

35 PARAVICINI, *Preußenreisen* (as in n. 3), vol. 1, p. 30; GOUGUENHEIM, *Chevaliers* (as in n. 15), p. 578.

his experience, without adding his own fantasy to make the story catchier<sup>36</sup>. Thus, one could imagine that such tales may have fuelled the imagination of a courtier writer such as Jean d'Arras, who most likely had the possibility to meet more than one knight back from a Lithuanian *Reise*.

According to the novel, Selodus has the body of the King of Bohemia burned<sup>37</sup>, which is characterised as a strikingly unchristian behaviour, as is expressed by the king's daughter: »you would have found my lord my father alive, whom King Selodus has killed and has had the body burned to despise even more the catholic faith<sup>38</sup>.« Hearing this, the angered Christians order Selodus and his men to be treated the same way: »and all the pagans would be burned, and all the Christians buried in sacred ground<sup>39</sup>.« Surprisingly, even if the burning of the pagans' bodies is depicted as an act of revenge, one can see that in the end, each of the dead enemies are bidden farewell according to his rites. Nevertheless, the tone of the novelist, whose characters may be inspired by contemporary figures but are still to be read as belonging to the world of fantasy, is clearly more condemning than what we have read in Philippe de Mézières and Guillebert de Lannoy. Still, one must keep in mind that Jean d'Arras's abuse is directed against »Saracens« who are burning Christian bodies, not honouring their own dead according to their custom!

### Dealing with noble adversaries' religion

The most spectacular rites of the Baltic pagans were known to French authors and their informers, but did not prevent them to write in a neutral tone about friendship between these »unbelievers« and Christian warriors. To the Teutonic Knights, pagan Lithuanians quickly became normal partners one could deal with, making peace and even entering into an alliance<sup>40</sup>. Such an occasional partnership has been remarked by

36 *Mais garde bien qu'il ne raconte / Fors que la pure verité; / Car ce qui sera recité / Par lui sera de ville en ville / Porté, si tost com tourne bille. / Pourquoi seroit grant villennie / S'il estoit prins en menterie* (v. 2898–2904), Jean Petit, »Les condicions qui sont requises à l'enfant d'un seigneur à estre droit gentilz«, *Le Livre du champ d'or et autres poèmes inédits*, ed. Pierre LE VERDIER, Paris 1896, p. 133; NEJEDLÝ, *Spisy středověkých* (as in n. 21), p. 107–108. About the circulation of news in the groups of travelling knights mentioned by Jean Froissart, *ibid.*, p. 101.

37 *Et le roy de Craquo fait prendre le corps du roy Fedric tout mort et le fist ardoir devant la porte pour plus esbahir ceulx de la cite de Prange*, Jean d'Arras, ed. VINCENSINI (as in n. 31), p. 518. Coudrette's poem mentions that a pyre had been used for burning the King's body: *Lors alumer ung grant feu font / Et de busche mette en ung mont, / Pres de la porte le feu firent* (v. 2357–2359), Coudrette, ed. MORRIS, VINCENSINI (as in n. 31), p. 208.

38 *vous eussiez trové monseigneur mon pere en vie, que le roy Selodus a mis mort et puis a fait ardoir le corps pour plus despiter la foy catholique*, Jean d'Arras, ed. VINCENSINI (as in n. 31), p. 528–530. The evil behavior of Selodus is emphasized by the answer Antoine de Lusignan gives to the King of Alsace, who told him that the »Saracens'« leader had King Frederic's body burned, *ou despit de toute crestienté: Par mon chief, dist Anthoine [...] vrayement, le roi Selodus fist grant mesprison et grant cruauté, car puisque uns homs est mort, c'est honte a son ennemy de le plus touchier*, *ibid.*, p. 530–532.

39 *feussent tous les payens ars et bruiz, et tous les crestiens enseveliz et mis en terre sainte*, *ibid.*, p. 530.

40 Cf. Rasa MAŽEIKA, *Of cabbages and knights: Trade and trade treaties with the infidel on the northern frontier, 1200–1390*, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994), p. 63–76; PARAVICINI, *Litauer* (as in n. 15), p. 261–265, 267; PETRAUSKAS, *Litauen* (as in n. 34), p. 238, 241–242; Stephen



the »Messin chronicle«'s author, who says his heroes were fighting Samogitians alongside with »Duke Vytautas of Lithuania, a Saracen, who helped the Prussians«<sup>41</sup>. By the time this raid took place (1400), Vytautas had long been baptised<sup>42</sup>, but this sentence shows that it was not seen as dishonour to fight on the side of a perceived pagan, who led a troop of Muslim Tatars<sup>43</sup>. On the other hand, the only war episode Guillebert de Lannoy took part in during his travel to the Baltic area was not against the Lithuanians or Samogitians, but against the Poles and Pomeranians, »who favoured the Saracens«<sup>44</sup>. In this case, the Teutonic Order's propaganda may have worked to lure the young knight<sup>45</sup>, but generally speaking, it seems that the guest crusaders found themselves quickly integrated in the Order's complicated policy, which reached farther than just waging war against the pagans<sup>46</sup>. A truce arrangement including a surprising practice is depicted by Jean Cabaret d'Orville, who possibly relied on the crusader Jean de Chastelmorand's testimony<sup>47</sup>:

»The Christians did so much [in war] that the Saracens were happy for them to go back to their countries, in return for the arrangement that, for some time, the Saracens of Lithuania and of Novhorod<sup>48</sup> would not pillage nor burn the churches of the Christians, and also that the Christians, knights of the Order of Prussia as well as of Livonia, would not in their land of Lithuania and nor in its marches burn the holy woods (as they name it) of pine trees, where they consumed by fire the bodies of their dead and made sacrifice of it. Thus this was granted by each side, and the peace was proclaimed in the provinces<sup>49</sup>.«

- C. ROWELL, Unexpected Contacts: Lithuanians at Western Courts, c. 1316–1400, in: *The English Historical Review* 111, no. 442 (1996) p. 557–577.
- 41 *Et estoit le duc Withate de Laitue Saraisin, aidant les Prusois*, Metzger Chronik, ed. WOLFRAM (as in n. 11), p. 337.
- 42 Grand-Duke Vytautas of Lithuania was baptised in 1384–1386.
- 43 *avoit bien que de son payx de Laitue que de Poulaine, que dez Russe, que des Tertez IIII<sup>xx</sup> millez chevalx*, Metzger Chronik, ed. WOLFRAM (as in n. 11), p. 337.
- 44 *qui favorisoient les Sarrasins*, Guillebert de Lannoy, ed. POTVIN (as in n. 13), p. 26.
- 45 HOUSLEY, Later crusades (as in n. 4), p. 402; HALECKI, Gilbert of Lannoy (as in n. 21), p. 318.
- 46 Rasa MAŽEIKA, An Amicable Enmity: some peculiarities in Teutonic-Balt relations, in: Charles INGRAO (ed.), *The Germans and the East*, West Lafayette 2007, p. 49–58; PARAVICINI, Litauer (as in n. 15), p. 253–282; PETRAUSKAS, Litauen (as in n. 34), p. 237–251; ROWELL, Unexpected contacts (as in n. 40), p. 557–577.
- 47 GOUGUENHEIM, Chevaliers (as in n. 15), p. 584–585; Olivier MATTÉONI, Portrait du prince idéal et idéologie nobiliaire dans »La Chronique du bon duc Loys de Bourbon« (1429), in: *Studi Francesi* 115 (1995), p. 4–9.
- 48 The text has *Norgalles*, which may be a corruption of Novhorod(-Siverskyi), the principality of the Lithuanian duke Korybut.
- 49 *Et tant firent chrestiens que les sarrasins furent tous lies d'eulx en realler en leur pays, parmi l'ordonnance faite que, de certain temps, les Sarrasins de Letho ne de Norgalles ne pilleroient nulles esglises des chrestiens ne les bruslerioient, ne aussi les chrétiens, chevaliers de la religion, tant de Prusse, comme de Niffelant, en leur pays de Letho ou es marches, n'arderoient les saints bois (que ainsi ils appellent) des pins, ou ils consuioient les corps de leurs morts par feu, et en faisoient sacrifice. Si fut octroyé d'une part et d'autre, et par ainsi fut la paix créée par les provinces*, Jean Cabaret d'Orville, ed. CHAZAUD (as in n. 13), p. 65.

As in the accounts of Mézières and Lannoy, one would hardly find any abuse in the chronicler's description of the Lithuanians' rites. One would be tempted to say the funerary practice of the pagans is mentioned in passing, without any moral judgement; the main concern seems to be that the *Reise* came to an end. Beside this, this extract shows that, at least according to the French chronicler and his informer, the Teutonic Knights went as far as to accept and respect the adversary's sacred places, at least if the Lithuanians promised to follow a similar attitude<sup>50</sup>. Even if a crusader-like ethos was reflected by the use of wording such as »Saracens«, the chronicler seems to depict the war against Lithuania more as a knightly activity than a religiously motivated fight for wiping-out paganism<sup>51</sup>. Showing pragmatic toleration toward the Balts' traditional religion is not seen as something dishonourable; on the contrary, the account goes on to note that the grand-master declared the *Reise* to have been honourable and a good occasion to dress the prestigious »table of honour« in Marienburg<sup>52</sup>.

Writing about King John of Luxembourg's expedition to Lithuania in his »Ly Myreur des Histors« (which despite his form of a universal chronicle, could be seen more as a roman), Jean d'Outremeuse (d. 1400) stages an interesting story, where the Baltic crusades meets elements of Arthurian romance<sup>53</sup>. The main character of this tale is a Lithuanian, *li roy Margalis*, who surrendered to King John after having been deprived of the possibility to fight a chivalric duel. John thinking that such a *proid'homme*<sup>54</sup> deserved to be baptised, he sent him a beautiful maiden, with the task to bring him to the fonts. Immediately seduced, Margalis (who now wears the Islamic title of »sultan«<sup>55</sup>) considers becoming a Christian to win the love of the girl. The words Jean puts in his mouth gives an insight of how Lithuanian religion was seen by an author writing in far-away France: »to renounce my faith is too difficult for me, because I would be deprived of parents and friends who could help me if I fell into poverty<sup>56</sup>.« The faith of a pagan nobleman is depicted as a part of larger social ties, al-

50 ROWELL, Lithuania Ascending (as in n. 10), p. 121. See also MAŽEIKA, Granting Power (as in n. 8), p. 153–171 and EAD., Of cabbages (as in n. 40), p. 63–76.

51 Cf. PETRAUSKAS, Litauen (as in n. 34), p. 243.

52 [...] *le hault maistre de Prusse qui vit que celle reise s'estoit si bien portée à l'honneur de soi [...] festoya la chevalerie qui o lui estoit moult haultement, et pour l'honneur du jour, le service divin accompli, en son chastel de Mariembourg fit couvrir la table d'honneur*, Jean Cabaret d'Orville, ed. CHAZAUD (as in n. 13), p. 65.

53 Pit PÉPORTÉ, Constructing the Middle Ages: historiography, collective memory and nation-building in Luxembourg, Leiden 2011, p. 171; Théodore DE PUYMAIGRE, Une campagne de Jean de Luxembourg, roi de Bohême, in: *Revue des questions historiques* 42 (1887), p. 176–179; PARAVICINI, Litauer (as in n. 15), p. 256; ROWELL, Lithuania Ascending (as in n. 10), p. 33; Václav ŽŮREK, Sur les traces des grands croisés. Le goût pour la croisade de Jean et Charles de Luxembourg et l'inspiration française, in: NEJEDLÝ, SVÁTEK (ed.), *Histoires et mémoires* (as in n. 30), p. 283.

54 *Ly Myreur des Histors. Chronique et geste de Jean des Preis dit d'Outremeuse*, ed. Stanislas BORMANS, vol. 6, Bruxelles 1880, p. 414.

55 *soldant, soldans*, *ibid.*, p. 415–416.

56 *mais ly renoier ma loy m'est trop dure, car je n'auroie parens ne ami, se je chaioie en povreteit, qui me dewist aidier*, *ibid.*, p. 416.

most as an ethnic custom insuring the integration of the individual in the society<sup>57</sup>. According to the author's view, renouncing to his ancestral faith would cut Margalis off from his fellow Lithuanians and condemn him to solitude. Immediately after, Jean states that »the devil held [Margalis] too hard in his netting, because he said he would rather die of love than be a believer«<sup>58</sup>. Referring to the devil as a warrant of the King's paganism may just be a figure of speech; nevertheless, this wording lets us foresee a hint of condemnation. Be he influenced by the social pressure or by supernatural powers, Margalis is treated as a courtly figure, whose fidelity to pagan faith allows the author to draw a tragic story filled with the taste of exoticism<sup>59</sup>.

Personal ties between pagans and Teutonic Knights are reported by Prussian chroniclers, who mention more than one episode displaying friendship between the Lithuanian dukes and a few individuals among the Order<sup>60</sup>. After having explained the funerary rites of the pagans, Philippe de Mézières introduces the story of a Teutonic Knight who has been taken prisoner by the Lithuanians, having lost one eye in the battle, and becomes the »King«'s trusted counsellor<sup>61</sup>. When the King dies, the Lithuanian barons elect the Christian knight to be his greatest friend, »and came to pay homage to him with beautiful words, praising him and approving his virtues and the love the king had shown to him«<sup>62</sup>. They want to burn him on the funeral pyre, but the Christian argues that he wouldn't be worthy of accompanying the King in the Otherworld because of his dead eye, an argument the Lithuanians accept, even praising him for his loyalty and goodness. This anecdote, maybe inspired by the story of a member of the Teutonic Order who became a favourite to grand-duke Gediminas before escaping from captivity<sup>63</sup>, testifies that such contacts were known to the French writer<sup>64</sup>, who even gives us the source from which he received it: »this story has been passed on to me as a real one by the old and valorous knights of the said Or-

57 On religion as custom and a boundary of social interchange, Stephen C. ROWELL, *Chartularium Lithuaniae res gestas magni ducis Gedemine illustrans*, Vilnius 2003, p. 386.

58 *mains li dyable le tenoit trop fort en ses laches, car ilh dest qu'ilh amoit mies à morir d'amours que eistre recreans*, Jean des Preis, ed. BORMANS (as in n. 54), p. 416.

59 Love stories between Christian and »Saracen« characters were not rare in the medieval literature: Catalina GIRBEA, *Le Bon Sarrasin dans le roman médiéval (1100–1225)*, Paris 2014, p. 453–484.

60 MAŽEIKA, *Amicable enmity* (as in n. 46), p. 53–55; PARAVICINI, *Litauer* (as in n. 15), p. 257; ROWELL, *Unexpected* (as in n. 40), p. 565.

61 *de tout en tout si fioit de lui, nonobstant qu'il fust crestien*, Songe du Viel Pelerin, ed. BLANCHARD (as in n. 9), p. 208.

62 *lui vindrent presenter cest honneur avec belles parolles, en lui loant et approuvant ses vertus et l'amour que le roy li avoit moustré*, *ibid.*

63 The grand dukes used to keep German prisoners of war as advisers: ROWELL, *Unexpected contacts* (as in n. 40), p. 563; Alvydas NIKŽENTAITIS, *Die litauische Gesellschaft der vorchristlichen Zeit (13.–14. Jahrhundert) zwischen Rom und Byzanz*, in: Michael MÜLLER-WILLE (ed.), *Rom und Byzanz im Norden. Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8.–14. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 2, Mayence, Stuttgart 1998, p. 126–127. On the knight whose story may have inspired Mézières, ROWELL, *Lithuania Ascending* (as in n. 10), p. 130–132.

64 PARAVICINI, *Litauer* (as in n. 15), p. 259, notes that »Diese Funeralzeremonie [...] bezeugt auch die ständige Gegenwart von Gefangenen auf beiden Seiten«. One could go further and note that Mézières treated friendship between a member of the Teutonic Order and a pagan leader as possible.

der [i. e. the Teutonic Order]<sup>65</sup>. « As it has been remarked by J. Blanchard, the word »honour«, which Mézières scarcely uses, appears not less than nine times in this episode, being seven times directly related to the voluntary sacrifice on the pyre<sup>66</sup>.

The extensive traveller Philippe de Mézières shows much more interest than disgust towards the funerary practices of the Order's pagan enemies, and even seems to have respected the loyalty of the Lithuanian noblemen who agreed to sacrifice their life to honour their lord. While being an energetic propagandist of the crusade to the Holy Land, Mézières was far from showing disrespect to non-Christians<sup>67</sup>; in other parts of the »*Songe du Vieil Pelerin*«, he reports the sacrifice of a Moorish emir's bodyguards, who tried to protect their lord from the swords of the King of Castille's henchmen: »I do not quite know, as I narrate with great pain, if such a case happened to a Christian king, if he could find some of his knights to do the same<sup>68</sup>.« As it may have been the case in the Order's chronicles<sup>69</sup>, the infidels are sometimes used as a mirror, through which the reader should note the imperfections of his own countrymen if compared to the noble unbelievers<sup>70</sup>. But the Lithuanian account of the »*Songe du Vieil Pelerin*« also stresses that for the author, the Lithuanians shared much in common with their enemies; the Teutonic Order, who are depicted as an almost perfect Christian and chivalric corporation<sup>71</sup>, has no monopoly of knightly virtues.

Most of the French accounts about Baltic pagans show no abuse directed against their religion; when they do not become friends or allies, the Lithuanians are depicted as habitual enemies, with whom one shares a good exchange of blows before making peace. In other words, nothing really different than what was happening in France in relation to Englishmen during the very same time. It seems that on the Baltic shore as well as in Western Europe, some common customs of chivalric behaviour applied to both enemies<sup>72</sup>, and that the French guests of the Teutonic Knights perfectly understood it. Despite the Lithuanians' attachment to paganism being the main avowed ground for launching the *Reisen*, this did not prevent their Western assailants from paying respect to them, or even from becoming interested in their customs. By the late 14th century, Europe's last pagans became familiar not only to the Teutonic Order's knight-monks, but on a wider scale, to Western aristocracy; one could say that the participation in *Reisen* led to the phenomenon S. C. Rowell calls

65 *Ceste histoire me fu contee pour vraye des anciens et vaillans chevaliers de la religion susdite, Songe du Viel Pelerin*, ed. BLANCHARD (as in n. 9), p. 209.

66 Joël BLANCHARD, *Les hiérarchies de l'honneur. Avatars d'une grille conceptuelle à la fin du Moyen Âge: Mézières et le Pseudo-Denys*, in: *Revue historique* 648 (2008), p. 799, n. 1.

67 Sharon KINOSHITA, »Noi siamo mercatanti cipriani«. How to Do Things in the Medieval Mediterranean, in: Renate BLUMENFELD-KOSINSKI, Kiril PETKOV (ed.), *Philippe de Mézières and His Age. Piety and Politics in the Fourteenth Century*, Leiden, Boston 2012, p. 41–60.

68 *Je ne say pas bien, a grant douleur recitant, se un tel cas avenoit a un roy crestien s'il trouveroit aujourd'hui ses chevaliers qui autel li fissent*, *Songe du Viel Pelerin*, ed. BLANCHARD (as in n. 9), p. 447.

69 ROWELL, *Lithuania Ascending* (as in n. 10), p. 39.

70 TOLAN, *Les Sarrasins* (as in n. 5), p. 330–331; Catherine GAULLIER-BOUGASSAS, *Saladin dans la littérature française. Les métamorphoses épiques et romanesques de l'histoire des croisades (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, in: NEJEDLÝ, SVÁTEK (ed.), *Histoires et mémoires* (as in n. 30), p. 233–253.

71 The point was to show his readers what an ideal knighthood looks like: GŁODEK, *Utopia* (as in n. 15), p. 82; GUGUENHEIM, *Chevaliers* (as in n. 15), p. 586.

72 PETRAUSKAS, *Litauen* (as in n. 34), p. 240–241; PARAVICINI, *Litauer* (as in n. 15), p. 255.

»Baltic »pagan chic«<sup>73</sup>, an interest for the exotic and respect for noble warrior peers which is clearly attested by Philippe de Mézières, Guillebert de Lannoy and the other few French authors who left us testimonies of their Baltic impressions.

### Familiar gods, ancient enemies: three German chroniclers construct the Baltic pagans

At first glance, the Latin chronicles about the wars of the military orders in the Baltic area differ completely from the elegant French courtly narratives and the travel notes of Guillebert de Lannoy. They are written by a very different sort of crusader than the courtiers, poets and romance writers who are our French sources. The author of the »Chronicon Livoniae« (c. 1225–1227),<sup>74</sup> Henry of Livonia, was a German priest who had arrived in Livonia under the patronage of Bishop Albert and then served as a parish priest to Lettish converts<sup>75</sup>. While occasionally sympathetic to the complaints of his parishioners<sup>76</sup>, Henry is clearly in favour of conquest and Christianization of the Baltic-area pagans<sup>77</sup>, and seems to have actually taken part in the battles against them, just like some of the French chroniclers<sup>78</sup>. His language is often biblical and religious themes are much in evidence<sup>79</sup>. It has been argued that he was writing »fast historiography«, an »unlearned report«, with »more concern for linear story-telling than for the construction of literary themes«<sup>80</sup>. Henry does not seem learned in the pattern of a Saxo Grammaticus or a William of Malmesbury and the chronicle does have many stories obviously meant to interest and entertain as well as edify<sup>81</sup>.

A century later the theatre of the Baltic crusade wars had shifted first to Prussia then to Lithuania and its Rus allies and tributaries. Chronicling these wars in the

73 ROWELL, *Unexpected* (as in n. 40), p. 559; GOUGUENHEIM, *Chevaliers* (as in n. 15), p. 577.

74 Henricus de Lettis, *Chronicon Livoniae: Heinrichs Livländische Chronik*, ed. Leonid ARBUSOW, Albert BAUER, Hannover 1955 (MGH. SS rer. Germ., 31); *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae: Heinrich von Lettland – Livländische Chronik*, ed. and trans. Albert BAUER, Würzburg 1959. Arbusow's Latin text repr. with added explanatory footnotes and Biblical references: Piero BUGIANI, *Enrico di Lettonia: Cronicon Livoniae, La crociata del nord (1184–1227)*, Livorno 2005.

75 On Henry of Livonia, the most complete new work: Marek TAMM, Linda KALJUNDI, Carsten Selch JENSEN (eds.), *Crusading and Chronicle Writing on the Medieval Baltic Frontier: A Companion to the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, Farnham 2011. Analysis of all historiography: Alan V. MURRAY, *Henry of Livonia and the Wends of the Eastern Baltic*, in: *Studi Medievali* 54 (2013), p. 807–833. Cf. Simon GERBER, *Heinrich von Lettland – ein Theologe des Friedens*, in: *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 115 (2004), p. 1–18; Anti SELART, *Livonia, Rus' and the Baltic Crusades in the Thirteenth Century*, Leiden 2015.

76 Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), X, 15; XI, 4. Because of the multiple editions of this source, all references to Henry of Livonia's chronicle in this paper will be to the book and chapter numbers assigned by the earliest editors and kept by later editions.

77 Peace only with conversion: GERBER, *Heinrich* (as in n. 75), p. 1–18.

78 Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), XIV, 5; XIX, 5–6.

79 GERBER, *Heinrich* (as in n. 77), p. 7–18.

80 Lars Boje MORTENSEN, *Comparing and Connecting: The Rise of Fast Historiography in Latin and Vernacular (12th–13th cent.)*, in *Medieval Worlds* 1 (2015), p. 25–39, here p. 36, 32.

81 E.g. Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), II 8; VII 2, 9; VIII, 3; IX, 1, 5; X, 3, 7, 12; X, 14; XI, 5 etc.

»Cronica Terre Prussie« (finished in 1326)<sup>82</sup> was Peter von Dusburg (*Petrus de Dusburgke*), an educated priest of the Teutonic Order<sup>83</sup>. Unlike Henry, Dusburg gives no indication that he personally fought the Baltic pagans, although he claims to use the accounts of participants, (a *topos* of many chronicles, perhaps true in this case) and identifies with them in his opening statement that his is an account of »the wars which were victoriously waged by us and by our predecessors the brothers of our Order<sup>84</sup>«. His chronicle, like Henry's, is permeated by Biblical language and religious imagery, although it also draws on a wider range of sources, as well as the occasional tossed-off classical reference which Peter probably obtained from some *florilegium*<sup>85</sup>. Dusburg like Henry wholeheartedly supports and justifies his Order's wars, stressing classic »just war« themes such as the defense of Christians and revenge for insults to Christianity rather than the conversion of pagans<sup>86</sup>.

The third chronicle considered in this section is quite different in tone, but is included here because it is written closer to the time of the French chroniclers. The »Chronicon Livoniae« was written soon after 1378 by Hermann von Wartberge, chaplain and head of the chancellery of the Master of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order<sup>87</sup>. Like Henry of Livonia and some French chroniclers, Herman seems to have himself participated in at least one expedition against the pagan Lithuanians<sup>88</sup>. His chronicle is mostly concerned with accounts of battles, and is much less re-

82 Petri de Dusburg, *Chronica terrae Prussiae*, ed. Jarosław WENTA, Sławomir WYSZOMIRSKI, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Pomniki dziejowe Polski*. n. s., vol. 13, Cracow 2007. Based on this edition but with added comments and some manuscript notes: *Cronaca della terra di Prussia: l'ordine teutonico dalla fondazione al 1326*, Pietro di Dusburg, ed. and transl. Piero BUGIANI, Spoleto 2012. Older editions: Petri de Dusburg (Peter von Dusburg) *Cronica Terre Prussie*, in: Max TÖPPEN (ed.), *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1861; Klaus SCHOLZ, Dieter WOJTECKI (ed.), *Peter von Dusburg, Chronik des Preußenlandes*, Darmstadt 1984, [reprint of Töpfen's edition's text, with added textual notes and a German translation]. To facilitate use of different editions or translations, Dusburg's chronicle cited here by book and section number.

83 On Dusburg and his sources, Jarosław WENTA, Piotr z Dusburga I jego Kronika, in: Jarosław WENTA, Sławomir WYSZOMIRSKI, *Piotr z Dusburga Kronika ziemi Pruskiej*, Torun 2004; ID., *Kronika Piotra z Dusburga a dzieje Zakonu Krzyżackiego zawarte w Kronice oliwskiej* in *Studia Źródloznawcze* 25 (1980), p. 121–132; SCHOLZ, WOJTECKI, *Chronica* (as in n. 82), p. 7, 10, 15; Marzena POLLAKÓWNA. *Kronika Piotra z Dusburga*, Wrocław 1968, p. 203–208; Marcus WÜST, *Zu Entstehung und Rezeption der »Chronik des Preußenlandes«* Peters von Dusburg, in: Bernhart JÄHNIG, Arno MENTZEL-REUTERS (eds.), *Neue Studien zur Literatur im Deutschen Orden*, Stuttgart 2014, p. 197–209; Marcus WÜST, *Studien zum Selbstverständnis des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter*, Weimar 2013, p. 67–87.

84 Dusburg (as in n. 82), *Epistola and Prolog*.

85 SCHOLZ, WOJTECKI, *Chronica* (as in n. 82), p. 17.

86 Rasa MAŹEIKA, *Violent Victims: Surprising Aspects of the Just War Theory in the Chronicle of Peter von Dusburg*, in: MURRAY, *Clash* (as in n. 14), p. 123–137. When Dusburg in book II lists the just causes of bearing arms, fighting paganism is not mentioned. Cf. Wüst, *Selbstverständnis* (as in n. 83), p. 78–85 on Dusburg's theme of repressing and punishing pagans who break the peace.

87 Anti SELART, *Die livländische Chronik des Hermann von Wartberge*, in: Matthias THUMSER (ed.), *Geschichtsschreibung im mittelalterlichen Livland*, Berlin 2011, p. 59–85, here p. 65. *Hermann von Wartberge, Chronicon Livoniae* in: Ernst STREHLKE (ed.), *Scriptores Rerum Prussicarum*, vol. 2, Leipzig 1863, p. 9–116; Ēvalds MUGURĒVIČS, *Hermann von Wartberge Chronicon Livoniae*, Riga 2005.

88 Wartberge, ed. STREHLKE (as in n. 87), p. 102.

religious in tone than the chronicles of Henry of Livonia or Peter von Dusburg, containing little Biblical language or religious justification for the Baltic wars. Like Henry's chronicle, it could be termed »fast historiography«, with little display of learning. Yet the history is written for a purpose, to glorify and thus to justify the power and possessions of the Teutonic Order<sup>89</sup>. But unlike Henry or Peter, Herman finds his justification in the Teutonic Knights' bravery and military successes, not in stories of martyrdom or of divine approval shown through miracles. In fact, his chronicle does not include any miracles at all, surely a rarity in medieval historiography.

Like the French sources analyzed by L. Chollet above, these three German chroniclers are concerned with honour. The most noticeable difference is the lack of romantic chivalry of the French type<sup>90</sup>. There are no beautiful maidens, no descriptions of landscape, no mention even of the »table of honour«. The Germanic concept of *Ehre* may have some role, but is far more evident in the German-language poems of the Teutonic Order<sup>91</sup>. In the chronicles under discussion here, honour resides not in external trappings but in the very fact of hard fighting, slaying of enemies, and subjugation of the pagan lands. Literary or exotic elements consist of marvels, miracles and anecdotes – the latter often brutally humorous<sup>92</sup>. Where the French poems breathe the atmosphere of courtly entertainments and tournaments, the German chroniclers often give laconic blow-by-blow accounts of blood and death, enlivened by adventure tales and (in the case of Henry of Livonia and Peter von Dusburg) stories of divine help in battle and divine reward to the fallen amidst their agonies. Nevertheless, the language of the three chroniclers can be quite different, since Hermann von Wartberg barely speaks of religion and has *no* miracle tales, while the prose of Henry of Livonia and Peter von Dusburg is permeated with Biblical imagery and quotes.

How did the three German chroniclers view the paganism of their enemies? Surprisingly, these warrior clerics, like the French chroniclers, do not display the horror we might expect. Indeed, sometimes pagan rites are laconically described as customs, with no commentary. Henry of Livonia describes sealing of a peace with sacrifices *sicut mos est paganorum* or *more gentilium*<sup>93</sup>, funeral feasts of the Estonians take place *more suo*<sup>94</sup>, cremations of the dead are reported without any condemnation<sup>95</sup>. Oddest is Henry's report, without comment or condemnation, that the Liv convert Caupo,

89 Norbert ANGERMANN, *Die mittelalterliche Chronistik*, in: Georg VON RAUCH (ed.), *Geschichte der deutschbaltischen Geschichtsschreibung*, Köln 1986, p. 15; SELART, *Livländische Chronik* (as in n. 87), p. 70.

90 Stefan VAN DER ELST, *Chivalry, Crusade and Romance on the Baltic Frontier*, in: *Mediaeval Studies* 73 (2011), p. 287–328 ascribes romantic chivalric tropes Dusburg, but this is problematic for a chronicler who (as Elst notes, though citing the wrong chpt.) condemns the reading of secular literature to the Order's knights: III, 81.

91 Mary FISCHER, *Di Himmels Rote: The Idea of Christian Chivalry in the Chronicles of the Teutonic Order*, Göttingen 1991.

92 E. g. Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), II, 8; IX, 14 etc.; Dusburg (as in n. 82), III, 5, 49, 66, 70, 311, 361 etc.

93 Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), V, 2; VI, 5.

94 *Ibid.*, XII, 6.

95 *Ibid.*, XIV, 5.

whose very Christian deathbed is »an emblematic example of dying well«<sup>96</sup>, was cremated (as if he were pagan)<sup>97</sup>. Herman of Wartberg's *only* text about the pagans' religion is that »In this year ... Algirdas, the high king of the Lithuanians, died. In his funeral [there was] great pomp in the cremation of divers things and 18 destriers according to their rite«<sup>98</sup>.« He adds no commentary, no condemnation. The marvel seems to be not in the cremation to accompany the dead but in the sacrificing of 18 horses of the most expensive type. Peter von Dusburg has a more condemnatory tone in his long report on the religion of the Old Prussians with many details, some of which are labelled a »demonic delusion« (we shall return to this topic), but even this is represented as the result of ignorance rather than sin<sup>99</sup>. The information about religion is in the same section as probably laudatory comments about the Prussians' customs, some of which may reflect factual observations but nevertheless are part of the classical *topoi* of the »noble savage« who should shame the luxury of the civilized<sup>100</sup>.

Interestingly, when Henry of Livonia or Peter von Dusburg mention the pagan deities, they use the word *dei* which seems to confer at least a classical dignity and perhaps even some reality upon what should theologically properly be viewed as illusion. Peter von Dusburg states that the Old Prussians worshipped *diversos deos* (book II, chpt 1), they sacrifice a captive *diis offerre* (III 91), their leader swears *per potenciam deorum suorum* to kill knights unless they surrender (III 165), Lithuanian ruler Gediminas swears *per deorum potenciam* that he does not want baptism (III 359), the Samogitians sacrifice a captured knight *diis suis* (III 338). Henry of Livonia situates this term in a more negative context: a horse is used to tell if the *diis* of the Livs (an Estonian tribe) wants a human sacrifice<sup>101</sup>; Christian captives are »killed by a cruel martyrdom, sacrificed to their gods« by the Livs<sup>102</sup>; a Lett convert says to pagans, »if you renounce the worship of your false gods (*deorum vestrorum falsorum*) and wish to believe with us in the true God« then their prisoners will be returned<sup>103</sup>; formerly pagan converts assert »that they had a bad God up to then«, and »petition to be given the good God by us [i. e. the Sword Brothers]«<sup>104</sup>. Pagan gods are »false« or »bad« here in the sense that it is wrong to worship them, but there is no indication that they do not exist.

96 Marek TAMM, *Martyrs and Miracles: Depicting Death in the Chronicle of Henry of Livonia*, in: TAMM, *Crusading* (as in n. 72), p. 137.

97 Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), XXI, 4. As Nils BLOMKVIST, *Discovery of the Baltic: the reception of a Catholic worldsystem in the European north*, Leiden 2005, p. 557 notes, Henry seems to have considered Caupo as a valuable ally. Perhaps this led to flexibility in funeral rites.

98 Wartberge, ed. STREHLKE (as in n. 87), p. 113: *Eodem anno circa idem tempus Algarden summus rex Letwinorum mortuus est. In exsequiis magna pompa in cremacione diversarum rerum ac XVIII equorum dextrariorum secundum ritum eorum.*

99 Dusburg (as in n. 82), III, 5.

100 Ibid. – Prussians shun soft beds and fine garments, they are generous to the poor. Cf. ROWELL, *Lithuania Ascending* (as in n. 10), p. 40. On this topos in medieval history writing: Matthew KEMPSHALL, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History 400–1500*, Manchester 2011, p. 39–40.

101 Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), I, 10.

102 Ibid., IX, 12.

103 Ibid., XIV, 11: *Si, inquit, renunciaveritis culture deorum vestrorum falsorum et nobiscum in Deum verum credere volueritis, vobis captivos istos vivos restitueamus.*

104 Ibid., XXIII, 7: *petebat a nobis bonum deum sibi dari, dicens se malum deum hactenus habuisse.*



In fact, in these three chronicles, as in other sources of the Baltic crusade, the pagan gods may actually have some power<sup>105</sup>. In Henry's chronicle, Rigan pagans do not heed the prediction of their gods which proves correct (XII 2), while Dusburg has pagans being correctly warned of ambushes through the pagan rite of casting sticks (III 210 and 347). But this power may be demonic, and the Devil may deceive his followers (although the misled are not necessarily evil): in Henry's chronicle, a Liv acting as a crusader ally says that his god has predicted an attacking army, but a Christian priest, »knowing this to be a demonic illusion«, tells him not to fear<sup>106</sup>. For Dusburg, the Old Prussians' belief in the resurrection of the cremated dead is an *illusio dyaboli*<sup>107</sup>. Most telling is a quote by Dusburg from Deuteronomy: when the Lithuanians lose a battle, »their god betrays them«<sup>108</sup>.

Here we see an important aspect of Dusburg's view of the Baltic pagans and their paganism: they are like the gentiles of the Hebrew Bible, while the Teutonic Knights are constantly compared to the Israelites, especially the Maccabees, who fight for their religion against unbelievers<sup>109</sup>. Henry of Livonia has less of this theme, but nevertheless directly quotes from the book of Maccabees and compares the wars of the Sword brothers with Gideon fighting the Philistines<sup>110</sup>. Much has been written on this topic which we need not expand here<sup>111</sup>, except to note its relevance to the occasional identification of pagan gods as demons, a *topos* which became popularized for descriptions of the Baltic pagans by Bartholomeus Anglicus a few years after Henry wrote his chronicle<sup>112</sup>. As has been little remarked in historiography relating to the Baltic area, this reification of pagan deities may stem from the Vulgate Bible mistranslation of Psalm 95:5, Christianized by St. Paul and later St. Augustine of Hippo: instead of »the gods of the gentiles are but idols« (in the sense of dead sculptures) the Vulgate has »since all the gods of the nations [are] demons«, and St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians stated »what the gentiles sacrificed, they sacrificed to demons and not to God«<sup>113</sup>. Thus Baltic-area pagans are less an alien »other« than a familiar ene-

105 MAŽEIKA, Granting Power (as in n. 8).

106 Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), X, 14: *intellegens demonis hanc esse illusionem*. All quotations from this chronicle in this paper are from the edition by Bauer (1959).

107 Dusburg (as in n. 82), III, 5.

108 Ibid., III, 251: *deus suus vendidit eos*, cf. Deut. 32:40, pointed out by SCHOLZ, WOJTECKI, Chronica (as in n. 82), p. 368.

109 Ibid., II, 6–9; III, 5, 11, 251 etc.

110 Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), IX, 13–14; XIV 5.

111 Mary FISCHER, The books of the Maccabees and the Teutonic Order, in: Crusades 4 (2005), p. 59–71A.

112 [The peoples of Livonia] *quorum ritus fuit mirabilis antequam a cultura demonum ad unius Dei fidem et cultum per Germanicos cogerentur. Nam deos plures adorabant prophanis et sacrilegis sacrificiis, responsa a demonibus exquirebant [...]*. Bartholomeus Anglicus, De proprietatibus rerum (Paris, Bibl. nat. de France, lat. 16098, fol. 146v), cited by Marek TAMM, Inventing Livonia: The Name and Fame of a New Christian Colony on the Medieval Baltic Frontier, in: Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung 60 (2011), p. 187–209, here p. 207.

113 Ps 95:5: *quoniam omnes dii gentium daemonia*; I Cor 10:20: *sed quae immolant gentes daemonibus immolant et non Deo*; Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Enarrationes in psalmos, in: A. B. CAILLAU, M. N. S. GUILLON (ed.), Collectio selecta SS. Ecclesiae Patrum complectens exquisitissima opera tum dogmatica et moralia, tum apologetica et oratoria, vol. 117, Paris 1837, p. 433–436; cf. Thomas de Cantimpré reference to this in describing Prussian sacred forest groves: *in iis*

my in a new guise<sup>114</sup>. Their gods are like the familiar demons that haunt the daily lives of the monks with temptations and torments. As Marcus Wüst points out, a central concept for Dusburg is the parallel between the external fight against Devil-inspired pagans and the internal struggle of each Teutonic Knight against the Devil's temptations.<sup>115</sup>

Unlike the Hebrew Scriptures, our chronicles rarely have invective against paganism as such or against pagans for their religion. Much has been made of Peter von Dusburg's labelling of pagans as *filiu Belial* (sons of the Devil)<sup>116</sup>. However, the only instances of such terminology betoken supposedly converted Prussians who rebel and who are seen as traitors and tellingly, the Christian Mazovian duke Swantopolk who aids these rebels<sup>117</sup>. Indeed, Henry's and Peter's descriptions of the Baltic natives before the arrival of German missionaries seem to excuse their paganism on the grounds of ignorance, with harsher language reserved for those who resist missionary teaching, attack Christians or apostatize. Here our priestly chroniclers are following standard Church teaching that ignorant paganism is not blameworthy if not aggressive, elucidated succinctly by Pope Innocent III in 1199 as he called on German knights to fight the Baltic-area pagans only because they were attacking converts<sup>118</sup>. Ignorance is an excuse in this theology, and Henry of Livonia stresses the Baltic natives' »stupidity« (*stulcitiā*): they supposedly know nothing of stone construction, believe that a bole in a tree is the Christian God and believe that baptism can be washed off<sup>119</sup>. Peter von Dusburg opens his description of the pagan Prussians by stating, »The Prussians did not have knowledge of God. Because they were simple folk, they could not comprehend Him through reason and because they were not literate they could not even see Him reflected in Scripture«<sup>120</sup>. To further construct this

*diis suis voluerint immolare. Hi sunt etiam daemones de quibus beatissimus Augustinus in libro de civitate Dei evidentissime scribit, Thomas Cantipratanus, Bonum universale de apibus, ed. G. COLVERENIUS, Douai 1627, L. 2, chpt. 57, p. 548–549.*

114 Innocent III RV 4 f. 188v, *Sicut ecclesiasticae religionis censura*, ed. Othmar HAGENEDER, Werner MAŁECZEK, Alfred A. STRNAD (ed.), Die Register Innocenz' III., vol. 2, Rome 1979, no. 182, p. 348: Baltic pagans worship *spiritibus immundis*; Pope Gregory IX, Encyclica de statu Prussiae in: Rudolf PHILIPPI (ed.), Preussisches Urkundenbuch, vol. I/1, Königsberg 1882, p. 66–67, no. 87: [Prussians] *virgines pro ridiculo floribus coronatas in ignem demoniis immolant*.

115 WÜST, Entstehung und Rezeption (as in n. 83), p. 204.

116 E. g. FEISTNER, Kampf (as in n. 1), p. 281–294; Michael NEECKE, Literarische Strategien narrativer Identitätsbildung, Frankfurt am Main 2008, p. 46.

117 Dusburg (as in n. 82): attacking Prussians are *filiu Belial* (III, 95); a Prussian *filia Belial* slave escapes from Brandenburg and gives information to the Prussians (III, 130); rebelling Prussians are *diabolico spiritu instigante* (III, 262); the Christian ally of the rebellious Prussians, Swantopolk, is a *filius diaboli* (III, 35). All Dusburg quotations in this paper are from the Wenta edition (as in n. 82).

118 RV 4, f. 188v, HAGENEDER, Die Register (as in n. 114), p. 348: *Sicut ecclesiasticae religionis censura compelli non pat Innoitur ad credendum invitos, sic sponte credentibus apostolica sedes, [...] munimen suae protectionis indulget, et fideles ad defensionem eorum salubribus monitis exhortatur*. Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, Liber ad milites Templi de laude novae militiae, in: MIGNE PL, vol. 182, col. 924: *Non quidem vel Pagani necandi essent, si quo modo aliter possent a nimia infestatione seu oppensione fidelium cohiberi*.

119 Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), I, 6; II 8.

120 Dusburg (as in n. 82), III, 5: *Prutheni noticiam Dei non habuerunt. Quia simplices fuerunt, ratione comprehendere non potuerunt, et quia literas non habuerunt, immo nec in scripturis ipsum speculari poterant*.

picture of the Prus as rather simple-minded (interestingly, the Lithuanians, the enemy Dusburg himself fought, are not portrayed this way), Dusburg includes various anecdotes obviously meant to amuse: the Galindians go into battle unarmed to obey a priestess (III 4), a Sambian handles a crossbow so carelessly it kills him (III 105), a Prussian sent to spy on the Teutonic Knights reports that they can survive any siege because they eat grass (i. e. cabbage – III 70).

But stupidity ceases to be an excuse for our chroniclers when those baptized (willingly or not) then abandon the new faith, reverting to paganism and attacking Christians. Henry of Livonia saves his harshest words for pagans who despoil Christian graves and churches (e. g. XIV 10) and especially for baptized natives who then rebel and attempt to revert to paganism<sup>121</sup>. Such apostasy is a constant theme in Peter von Dusburg's chronicle, treated always as diabolically evil<sup>122</sup>. That apostasy is a category not so much of faith as of alliance is clear from the excoriation of the Pomeranian (i. e. Slavic) duke Swantopolk, who is never described as participating in any pagan practices. He is a »son of perdition« because he aids the Prussian converts who seek to return to their old religion<sup>123</sup> – an interesting parallel to Guillebert de Lannoy who, as mentioned in the first part of this paper, came to the Baltic area to aid the Teutonic Order's crusade yet ended up fighting the Christian Poles »who favoured the Saracens«<sup>124</sup>. As well as the theological justification for violence as punishment of apostasy or allies of apostates, Dusburg's chronicle includes many sections which are standard arguments for »just war« in the Roman or Augustinian sense: defense of the weak, revenge for insults, regaining of lost territory etc.<sup>125</sup> In describing an early battle in which crusaders come to help the Teutonic Knights, Dusburg does echo Deuteronomy to exult, »the quivering sword of the Christian army devours the flesh of the infidel«<sup>126</sup>. Perhaps this passage is a quote from whatever is Dusburg's source for this battle a century before his time. Certainly it is atypical, because most of Dusburg's chronicle is firmly constructed around the classic justifications of defensive war – however far these may seem from the way we perceive the Baltic wars.

Hermann von Wartberge has no such passages, and is surprisingly neutral in his attitude towards paganism. His worst pagan atrocity story, of a mock crucifixion, has attached an expression of doubt (*ut asseritur*)<sup>127</sup>. Atrocities are ascribed not to paganism but to particular pagans. Interestingly, out of 104 mentions of the Lithuanians and Lithuania, Herman labels them infidels or *terra infidelium* only 11 times. Mostly they are simply »the enemy«, »the adversary« – *adversari* or *Letwini* – or specific-

121 Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), I, 9, 11; II, 8; XIV, 5. Cf. Shami GHOSH, *Conquest, Conversion and Heathen Customs in Henry of Livonia's »Chronicon Livoniae« and the »Livländische Reimchronik«*, in: *Crusades* 11/1 (2012), p. 87–108.

122 Dusburg (as in n. 82), III, 35, 95, 130, 262.

123 *Ibid.*, III, 32, 35, 66.

124 *qui favorisoient les Sarrasins*, Guillebert de Lannoy, ed. POTVIN (as in n. 13), p. 26.

125 E. g. Dusburg (as in n. 82), II, 9; III, 9, 249 and *passim*. See MAŽEIKA, *Violent Victims* (as in n. 86); cf. WENTA, *Piotr z Dusburga* (as in n. 83), p. XIX: the conquest of Prussia is justified by the defense of clerics and laity as well as the treachery of neophytes. Pagans are evil because they seek to destroy Christianity.

126 Dusburg (as in n. 82), III, 11: *Ibi gladius militiae Christiane vibratus carnes infidelium devoravit [...]*. Cf. Deut. 32:42, noted by SCHOLZ, WOJTECKI, *Peter von Dusburg* (as in n. 80), p. 112.

127 Wartberge, ed. STREHLKE (as in n. 87), p. 71.

ly named, since Wartberge knows the names of many Lithuanian individuals, especially the noble war chiefs and the members of Lithuania's ruling family. Writing in the late 14th century, when the Lithuanians were adopting western European customs of war as well as their weapons, Wartberge constructs a different role for the pagans – they are simply the other side in the battle, not primarily a religious opponent. It is an era when, as we saw from the French sources, the crusaders and their pagan enemies are developing some measure of mutual knowledge and respect<sup>128</sup>. Wartberge can rage against the *perfidiam* of the Baltic natives, but this is always in accounts of apostasy – in other words, of breaking a treaty, exactly what we might expect from an author who was also head of a chancellery<sup>129</sup>.

Illustrative here is a contrast between Dusburg's and Wartberge's account of Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas' diplomatic overtures to Hanseatic cities and to the Pope in 1323, when he dangled promises of accepting baptism in order to get a peace treaty<sup>130</sup>. Writing soon after these events, Dusburg is unrestrainedly furious, comparing Gediminas to the biblical deaf asp and sarcastically remarking after Gediminas attacks Livonia, »Behold what sort of devotion this lying deceiver (*seductor*) had for accepting baptism«<sup>131</sup>! Hermann von Wartberge, on the other hand, describes Gediminas' negotiations very neutrally, even seeming to excuse the Lithuanian ruler by implying that his offer of baptism had been sent by the Rigans »under his name« (the implication is this might be without his knowledge) and reporting that Gediminas »responded that he had never thought of baptism or the Faith, but if they wished to conclude a peace, he was content«<sup>132</sup>. This parallels what may be the actual speech of Gediminas, recorded in a secret report by Rigan envoys<sup>133</sup>. Wartberge then states that after peace was contracted and »the [Lithuanian] king was secure from attacks by the Livonian and Prussian [Teutonic Order], collecting an army he entered the Mark [of Brandenburg] and ravaged it«<sup>134</sup>. The tone is laconic, the chancellor reporting a deceitful diplomatic maneuver, not an account of religious deceit.

Wartberge's laconic register is most startling in his brief statement that, during one raid into Lithuania, the landmarshall of Livonia with his troop »at daybreak found the nude, despoiled bodies of the fallen [Teutonic Knights], which they burned«<sup>135</sup>.

128 MAŽEIKA, *Amicable Enmity* (as in n. 46); PETRAUSKAS, *Litauen* (as in n. 34); PARAVICINI, *Litauer* (as in n. 15), p. 237–251, 253–282.

129 Wartberge, ed. STREHLKE (as in n. 87), p. 34, 41, 72.

130 ROWELL, *Lithuania Ascending* (as in n. 10), p. 189–228 and *id.*, *Chartularium* (as in n. 57); Rasa MAŽEIKA, *Bargaining for baptism: Lithuanian negotiations for conversion, 1250–1358*, in: James MULDOON (ed.), *Varieties of Religious Conversion in the Middle Ages*, Gainesville 1997, p. 131–145; Rasa MAŽEIKA, *Tekstas ir potekste Gedimino laiskuose Vokietijos miestams bei vienuoliams*, in: Albinas JOVAIŠAS (ed.), *Metraščiai ir kunigaikščių laišakai. Senoji Lietuvos literatūra*, Vilnius 1996, p. 147–157; Darius BARONAS, *How to play with Western Christians*, in: *id.*, Stephen Christopher ROWELL (eds.), *The Conversion of Lithuania: From Pagan Barbarians to Late Medieval Christians*, Vilnius 2015, p. 119–148.

131 Dusburg (as in n. 82), III, 358: *Ecce qualem devotionem seductor iste habuit ad suscipiendum baptismatis sacramentum*.

132 Wartberge, ed. STREHLKE (as in n. 87), p. 61: *Rex autem respondit de fide aut baptismo nihil cogitasse unquam sed si pacem tractare vellet esset contentus*.

133 ROWELL, *Chartularium* (as in n. 57), p. 184.

134 Wartberge, ed. STREHLKE (as in n. 87), p. 61–62.

135 *Ibid.*, p. 109: *lantmarscalcus [cum suis] invenerunt corpora cesa nuda spoliata, que conflagrarunt*.

Such cremation of dead Christians was totally against Church teaching, and in fact a serious accusation against the Teutonic Order made by Rigans to papal legates was that the Order burned its dead<sup>136</sup> – something the Order denied and included among pagan practices that it forced the native Prussians to abjure<sup>137</sup>. But Hermann von Wartberge simply reports it, probably because it was a common enough practice on raids into enemy territory in the dead of winter when the frozen ground prevented burial and the necessary quick retreat after raiding precluded carrying out bodies. In some ways, Herman de Wartberge approaches the attitude of the French crusaders who would have accompanied him on raids into Lithuania. The enemy is the fellow in front of you in the fight, and if he is a respectable fighter and has adopted some western customs, the battle goes more smoothly. If he can be accused of atrocities, that adds to your glory in exacting revenging. There are no descriptions of exotic or horrifying details of the enemy's religion, *no* miracles at all and few references to religion except those where the losers in a battle accept baptism as part of their surrender<sup>138</sup>. Although missionary activity is mentioned once approvingly, in Hermann's chronicle fighting holds central place, and the enemy's beliefs are of little interest. If, as Anti Selart argues, the main purpose of Wartberge's chronicle was to justify the possessions and power of Livonian branch of the Order vis à vis the Archbishop of Riga<sup>139</sup>, then it is all the more significant that this justification is couched in military rather than religious language. Evidently, if the goal were conversion of the heathen, the Archbishop could have been adequate, while a foregrounding of military defensive conquest instead implies that the knights of the Teutonic Order were vitally necessary and thus should have the dominant role.

Does this mean that »pagan« was simply a synonym for »political enemy« and that all those who resisted were considered pagans by our chroniclers, as Henrik Janson convincingly argued for works relating to the Slavs in the early Middle Ages<sup>140</sup>? Certainly for the Baltic area also, »baptism is not merely a religious act, but rather the consecration of a new allegiance«<sup>141</sup>. Nevertheless, the chroniclers of the warrior monks, whose daily life was so intertwined with that of the pagans who surrounded them<sup>142</sup>, differentiated between pagan and Christian enemies and between different tribes of pagans, just like some of the French chroniclers. Unlike the French sources, they do not call the Baltic pagans »Saracens«, but rather know their names in the native languages. Henry of Livonia names individual peoples – Estonians, Letts, Latga-

136 Order's reply: August SERAPHIM (ed.), *Das Zeugenverhör des Franciscus de Moliano* (1312), Königsberg 1912, p. 205, 285.

137 Treaty of Christburg, in: PHILIPPI (ed.), *Preussisches Urkundenbuch* (as in n. 114), no. 218, p. 161.

138 Wartberge, ed. STREHLKE (as in n. 87), p. 27, 35.

139 SELART, *Livländische Chronik* (as in n. 87), p. 70.

140 Henrik JANSON, What made the pagans pagans?, in: Tsvetelin STEPANOV, Georgi KAZAKOV (ed.), *Medieval Christianitas: Different Regions, »Faces«, Approaches*, Sofia 2010, p. 13–30, here p. 28. Cf. ID., *Making Enemies: Aspects on the Formation of Conflicting Identities in the Southern Baltics around the Year 1000*, in: Tuomas M. S. LEHTONEN, Kurt Villads JENSEN (ed.), *Medieval History Writing and Crusading Ideology*, Helsinki 2005, p. 141–154.

141 Marek TAMM, Tõnno JONUKS, *Religious Practices of the Native Population of Livonia in the Medieval Written Sources*, in: Mare KÕIVA (ed.), *Mythologia Uralica: Esthonica*, Helsinki (at press).

142 They may even have traded with their enemies: R. MAŽEIKA, *Cabbages* (as in n. 40), p. 63–76.

lians, Livs, Lithuanians, Semgallians, Ugurians and individuals such as Caupo, Dabrel, Daugeruthe, Lembit, Paike, Pudiviru, Rameko, Tabelin, Vytmas and others<sup>143</sup>. While threatening divine punishment upon Christians who attack the Swordbrothers (XXV 2), he differentiates between them and pagans<sup>144</sup>. Rus enemies of crusaders are spared by the victorious Germans *prae reverencia christiani nominis* although their city is sacked (XIII 4). Some pagans are praised as good allies, for instance when the Letts, although still pagan, do not join in an attack on the Swordbrothers<sup>145</sup>. Other pagans are especially to be feared: the Lithuanians are »swifter and crueller than other peoples« and like wolves to the Livs and Letts<sup>146</sup>, yet a Lithuanian convert is lauded as a martyr (XV 9). Most significant for our topic are the descriptions of human sacrifice to the pagan gods. We might dismiss this a topos, a symbol of pagan cruelty. Then why in Henry's chronicle is it practiced only by the Estonians and Livs, and there are only two definite cases<sup>147</sup>? Despite the invective against the Lithuanians, there is no description of their human sacrifices – perhaps an indication that Henry was truly trying to record only what he had heard about?

Similarly, Peter von Dusburg's chronicle has only two episodes of human sacrifice, one enacted by Prussians and one by the Samogitians<sup>148</sup>. Dusburg also differentiates pagan peoples and individuals: the nine tribes of Prussians, Galindians, Nattangians, Barthians; Lithuanians and Curonians; the Prussian leaders Herkus Mantus, Glappo, Auttume and Diwan; Lithuanian rulers Pukuveras, Vytenis, Gediminas and many other nobles<sup>149</sup>. These are not generic enemies, they are individuals with whom Dusburg's Order fights and sometimes negotiates. Conversion does also mean submission to the Order as former pagans »bow their necks to the faith and to the Brothers«<sup>150</sup>. But Christian enemies are not called pagans, and unconquered pagans such as Gediminas are excoriated for attacking Christians and not for their faith or rituals. All this is even clearer in Hermann von Wartberge's chronicle. He never uses the term *pagani* and the term *infideles* only rarely. The only pagans remaining by Wartberge's time were the Lithuanians, and this chronicler knows the names of their rulers (called *rex*) and the names and relationship of the members of the ruling family of Gediminids as well as the names of many other Lithuanians who led war parties<sup>151</sup>. Fighting holds the main stage, along with weather conditions and supply problems. Political and military aspects are foregrounded, as we might expect from the chancel-

143 E.g. Henry of Livonia (as in n. 74), VII, 1; X, 4; VII, 6; V, 3; XI, 7; VII, 3; X, 10; XVII, 3; XIV, 12; XV, 7; XVII, 2; XXV, 2 and passim.

144 Ibid., XXV, 2: *Et quis unquam regum aut paganorum sive Danorum sive quarumcunque gentium contra Lyvoniā pugnavit et not interiit.*

145 Ibid., X, 3.

146 Ibid., XI, 5: *velociores et crudeliores aliis gentibus*; XIII, 4: *Et fugerunt Rutheni per silvas et villas a facie Letonum licet paucorum, sicut fugiunt lepores ante faciem venatorum, et erant Lyvones et Lethti cibus et esca Lethonum et quasi oves in fauce luporum.*

147 Ibid., I, 10; IX 12.

148 Dusburg (as in n. 82), III, 91, 338.

149 Ibid., III, 3, 4, 26 and passim; III, 89, 248, 250, 356 and passim.

150 Ibid., III, 27, 31, 75: *colla sua fidei Cristiane et fratribus humiliter subjecerunt.*

151 Wartberge, ed. STREHLKE (as in n. 87), rulers: p. 42, 46, 85–86, 61–65, 76, 107, 111, 67, 76, 69, 72, 79, 111–112, 115; nobles: 66, 67, 116, 91, 92, 103, 113.

lor of the Master of Livonia. The pagans' religion is simply of less interest than who led a pagan army and how they fought.

### Conclusion

For our chroniclers, attacking the pagans of the Baltic area would undoubtedly have seemed a blessed enterprise, but complicating this discourse is the human fascination with the exotic and a very human wish for an enemy worth one's mettle. In these sources the enemy is particularized and individualized, and thus to some extent humanized. Fighting men and clerics describing their battles knew their enemies quite well; they were able to distinguish between individuals, tribes, languages. At least in a few cases, they appear to have been interested in the enemy's customs, which became familiar rather than alien. Occasionally, the pagans could even be held up as an example to Christians. The Latin chroniclers of were concerned with the moral values and Biblical models of the fighting monks, but mostly to portray them as defenders of the faithful in a classical »just war« sense. The paradigm for the pagan enemy is that of the Biblical gentiles and the paradigm for the enemy religion can be the devilish illusions which also bedevil Christians. For both French chivalric and Teutonic clerical sources, pagan religion may fascinate with its exotic elements, but it is not in the end surprising or unduly horrifying, but rather part of the marvels and meritorious dangers a crusader may expect to encounter. Even when a narrative is clearly being constructed, as is of course the case with all our sources, that narrative is more complex than the categories constructed by modern historiography.