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THE RAVAGES OF HOLY WAR

Crusade and colonisation in the thirteenth century

Brother Ulrich was brave in mind and body ... in a battle with the Sudovians he received five wounds in the manner of the cross, as he had always wanted, and he died of them.

(Nicolaus of Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia*, III: 204–206; Fischer, 2010, p. 197)

Crusading ideology in the Baltic

The military orders were an established model for crusading in Christian European society by the mid-twelfth century, and local varieties would be successfully used as the tools of rulers. The idea of founding religious orders of knighthood would eventually pave the way for secular knightly orders (Boulton, 2000, pp. 16–22). But in the thirteenth-century Baltic world, holy warriors were increasingly needed for the growing number of crusades against indigenous pagan societies. Only a few hundred kilometres from Prussia, Bishop Albert had used the model of the military orders to found the Sword Brothers, who would play a fundamental role in the conquest of Livonia before being incorporated into the Teutonic Order after a disastrous defeat in 1236 at Saule in Samogitia. Polish attempts to conquer areas of Prussia had been ongoing since the mid-twelfth century, but these sporadic invasions did not become ‘crusades’ until the early 1200s. Bishop Christian, inspired by his contemporary in Livonia, encouraged the foundation of a military order to defend the borderlands of Prussia: the Knights of Christ (Starnawska, 2001, pp. 420–421). Konrad, Duke of Masovia, provided the Knights with territory in the Dobrin Land (who then adopted the name Order of Dobrin), but other military orders were also being encouraged by Polish and Pomeranian magnates to invest in the south-eastern Baltic, including the Templars and even the Spanish Knights of Calatrava (*ibid.*, p. 422). Ducal control over the military orders ultimately failed after the Teutonic Order was invited to participate in reclaiming the borderlands from pagan Prussians in 1225. With papal endorsement, Imperial and Polish support and enthusiastic responses to the calls for crusade, the Order

soon took complete control of what became a systematic conquest of Prussian tribal territories.

The Prussian Crusade was technically a series of crusades sustained over five decades. The mid-point of these crusades was the Treaty of Christburg in 1249, which consolidated the Order's hold over Pomesania and Warmia. Conflict with western Natangia lasted until 1253 and the following year Barta and Galindia had been officially included within the conquered territories. In 1255, Sambia was initially occupied with the aid of Ottokar II of Bohemia, although it was not pacified until nearly a decade later, whilst eastern Natangia was overwhelmed by the Order's armies in 1256. The crusaders then turned their attention to Samogitia, but their catastrophic defeat at Durbe prompted the Great Prussian Uprising which would endure until 1274, followed by a short-lived rebellion two years later. At this point Nadruvia and Scalovia were occupied and the Order's armies pushed further east again. Sudovia was gradually occupied by 1283, when Peter of Dusburg notes the end of the wars with the Prussians, whilst conflicts with Lithuania on the north-east Prussian frontier would continue into the 1290s (Dygo, 2008a; Urban, 2000). The Teutonic Order came to represent the crusading ideal in the Baltic region, although it was joined by many secular contingents of crusaders who came to Prussia and Lithuania in order to participate, for a period of 40 days, in a holy war where their sins would be absolved (see also chapter 1). Recruitment into the Order dramatically increased, with over 60 per cent of the membership in Prussia during the thirteenth century coming from central-eastern Germany and eastern Saxony, with smaller numbers from Franconia, Swabia and Hesse, as well as from the Rhineland, Westphalia, the Netherlands and Austria (Dorna, 2004).

A defining feature of the Prussian Crusade was a deliberate, sustained process of colonisation and the gradual development of an administrative structure to manage the conquered territories. Colonisation was integral to the activities of the military orders in all the frontiers of Christendom (Boas, 2006). The Order of Dobrin had been actively involved in settling the land granted to them by Duke Konrad; the Teutonic Order had likewise encouraged colonists to develop their holdings in Galilee and Transylvania, and they had been offered the Kulmerland in exchange for securing the Masovian borderland. Successful management of these territories required flourishing, well-connected settlements; not only did they provide a pool of skilled labour essential for constructing and maintaining fortifications, but they generated wealth for the Order and provided military and logistical support. Our understanding of the relationship between the Teutonic Order's early fortifications and settlements – of this first wave of colonisation – remains sketchy, and will require more detailed chronological reconstruction of individual sites through archaeological investigation. In some cases, the Order set up its bases in or near existing settlements (e.g. Königsberg), in other instances it took advantage of earlier, abandoned infrastructure such as strongholds (e.g. Graudenz (Grudziądz)), as

well as encouraging the foundation of settlements in places with no evidence for previous occupation (e.g. Elbing). With the consolidation of the Order's territorial gains came increased control over these settlements and many were subsequently reorganised or relocated with official town privileges. But these town communities quickly developed their own complexity and identity, becoming increasingly independent from their founders. The extent to which these centres were controlled by the Order remains debatable (Chęć, 2007; see also chapter 5).

Archaeological evidence for the crusading period indicates a schism in early-medieval culture. The majority of indigenous strongholds and settlements cease to be occupied and castles, towns and churches are built by the incomers. In this respect the impact of the Prussian Crusade is very different to the Norman Conquest of England. Whilst some sites have actual destruction horizons, there are very few traces of the conflicts documented by Peter of Dusburg. Battlefield assemblages are difficult to locate, the Prussians are known to have cremated their dead and fallen crusaders would have been recovered for burial in consecrated ground. The forests of north-east Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast are littered with mass graves from the two World Wars, but these conflicts and the loss of human life were on an incomparable scale. In this respect, the archaeology of the Prussian Crusade is predominantly the archaeology of colonisation. Traditionally this episode, a defining moment in the historical development of European society, has been seen as part of *Ostsiedlung* – the eastwards expansion of German settlement. Avoiding engagement with nationalist sentiment (see also chapter 8), it is instructive to briefly consider the archaeology of medieval colonisation of lands west of Prussia, specifically Pomerania, as this resonates with trends in the south-eastern Baltic: processes involving military conquest, religious conversion and urbanisation, loosely framed by the ideology of holy war.

The archaeology of *Ostsiedlung*: holy war and colonisation

Polish archaeologists and historians have emphasised the Slavic origin of trading centres on the southern Baltic coast that prompted the development of towns such as Kołobrzeg (Kolberg), Szczecin (Stettin) and Lübeck, supported by extensive economic hinterlands. However, most early-medieval Pomeranian settlements have material culture suggesting the hybridisation of Slavic and Scandinavian cultures; indeed, Scandinavians appear to have played important social roles as far south as Kałdus and Poznań within the early Polish state. From the ninth century the eastward movement of Christian, German-speaking communities into regions occupied by pagan Slavs is a well-documented process, intensifying in the eleventh century, and the development of the eastern duchies of the Holy Roman Empire – Pomerania, Brandenburg and Lusatia – is well known (Meyer, 1996; Higounet, 1986; Bartlett, 1994). By the mid-twelfth century, the land between the Elbe and the Oder would be colonised, secured politically and militarily through the construction of castles and framed

within the context of Christianisation, which included the declaration of a crusade against the pagan Wends (see also chapter 1). The process was driven by elite groups such as the archbishops of Magdeburg and powerful magnates such as Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, who founded the Marquisate (German *Mark*) of Brandenburg in the mid-twelfth century.

Archaeology has an important role to play in documenting and understanding medieval colonisation, as more traditional sources of historical evidence cannot stand alone (Wünsch, 2008, p. 10). The events of the twelfth-century *Ostsiedlung* are paralleled by the construction of strongholds and churches, as well as the reorganisation of towns that established a template for planning subsequent colonising settlements (Brather, 2005). Whilst the abundance of archaeological data on the development of Lübeck contrasts with the limited knowledge of colonising elite sites in Brandenburg, archaeological investigations in the post-war period have significantly contributed to our understanding of the restructuring of Pomeranian settlements, particularly Szczecin and Kolobrzeg, but also Wolin, Cammin and Stargard (Leciejewicz, 1995). There is an evident distinction between late Slavic (*spätslawischer*) and early German (*frühdeutscher*) material cultures by the mid-twelfth century, reflecting a gradual Germanisation of the Polabian Slavs following their incorporation into the political, religious and economic structures of the Holy Roman Empire (Kempke, 1995). The process of cultural transformation is protracted and takes several centuries. For example, in mid-eleventh century Slavic Lübeck (Alt Lübeck), the presence of stave buildings points to neighbouring German and Danish influences (Fehring, 1990, p. 253). Slavic Lübeck is documented as being destroyed in 1138 and the German town founded in the same location five years later, however, excavations revealed that some parts of the settlement were uninterrupted with direct continuity between the two phases, such as the use of late Slavic buildings into the early German period. When the new city was founded in 1159 following its documented destruction by fire, the archaeological evidence indicates this was in fact only an extension of the existing settlement, much of which survived intact. A further wave of colonisation from the 1180s had a more noticeable impact on the internal development of the town. Lübeck, like many German planned towns, represented an expansion and reworking of late Slavic settlements in this region (Fehring, 1990), with evidence for continuity in the use of roads and fortifications at some of these sites (Hill, 1995). The western Slavic aristocracy as well as the Cistercians and Premonstratensian monastic orders played an important role in organising and encouraging Christian German settlers, although the number of migrants was relatively small (Wünsch, 2008, p. 25).

A parallel situation occurred in neighbouring Pomerania from 1119–1121, where the Polish King Bolesław III (the Wrymouthed) was reinforcing military conquest with Christianisation, and politically this region would largely remain a semi-independent vassal of Poland until 1309. The presence of German groups in towns such as Gdańsk is known from the written sources

and from trends that have been identified archaeologically, such as the appearance of German culinary culture represented by the introduction of carp and herring (Makowiecki, 2001), whilst locally produced material culture retained its Slavic character (see also chapter 5). Efforts to consolidate the religious conversion of Pomerania saw the establishment of the Cistercian abbey of Oliwa near Gdańsk in 1186, subservient to the Polish Diocese of Kuyavia. In the early-thirteenth century, the Dominican monastery in the town would be founded from Cracow, aimed at reinforcing the evangelising process (see also chapter 6). The military orders also became involved in this process; in 1198 the Hospitallers were granted the stronghold at Starogard Gdański and maintained a presence there until 1370, although they did not participate in crusades against the Prussians (Starnawska, 2001, p. 420). Christianisation was clearly a defining element of the cultural changes that shaped early-medieval Brandenburg and Pomerania (Rębkowski, 2007). The physical infrastructure of the Catholic Church in these regions was only more widely established following military conquest and colonisation, reflected in the proliferation of churches and monasteries. However, shifts in burial rites from cremation to inhumation, as well as the abandonment of animal deposits in cemeteries (Kuczkowski & Kajkowski, 2012), was a regionally variable process reflecting the staggered stages of religious conversion which continued into the thirteenth century (Pollex, 2004).

Aside from the community of German merchants residing in Novgorod, the furthest extent of *Ostsiedlung* in the mid-twelfth century was the German (so-called ‘Saxon’) settlement of southern Transylvania, organised by the Hungarian crown in the region of the *Terra Bursa* or *Burzenland*. Archaeologically, the clearest evidence of this colonisation is derived from seven cemetery sites which can be dated to the mid-twelfth century by their specific burial rites (the so-called anthropomorphic graves), as well as the first phases of some associated churches (Ioniță, 2005). This region was a permeable frontier between Christian Hungary and the region occupied by nomadic, pagan Cumans. The threat of Cuman raids prompted the Hungarian King Andrew II to invite the Teutonic Order in 1217 to create a stable borderland, to be echoed by Duke Konrad’s invitation several years later. Written sources credit the Order with the construction of five castles within a decade of arriving, although only the identification of one or two of these as surviving monuments are widely accepted by archaeologists (Laszlovszky & Soós, 2001). Virtually all agree on the location of Marienburg castle next to the village of Feldioara, 15km north of Braşov and the Carpathian Mountains (Ioniță *et al.*, 2004) (Figure 3.1). Excavations of the village cemetery revealed burial rites indicative of the presence of German colonists and datable by associated coins to the mid-twelfth century, suggesting that when the Teutonic Knights came here they made use of the existing infrastructure already established by familiar German-speaking communities. The form of the castle at Feldioara is tailored to its topographic setting, but it is not reminiscent of the Order’s castles in the Holy Land. The



(a)



(b)

FIGURE 3.1 The castle at Fieldioara, Transylvania, identified as the site of the Teutonic Order's castle of Marienburg (a). Excavations from 1990–1995 and in 2007 revealed substantial foundations of a wall probably dating to the thirteenth century (b). The wall was demolished during the rebuilding of the castle in the fourteenth century and the outer wall was moved away from the edge of the mound; both walls of the north-facing part of the castle are visible in (b)

earliest phase of this elongated structure consists of a stone wall surviving only as foundations, encircling an irregular courtyard and punctuated with two towers, elements of which may date to the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, subsequent demolition and restoration of the castle wall has truncated and mixed its archaeological strata, including significantly earlier La Tène and Neolithic material, although the robust foundation wall of the early castle survived more or less intact below ground (Pluskowski *et al.*, 2010a). The speed and efficiency of the Teutonic Order's building programme is attested by this structure. Fourteen years after their arrival the Order was expelled and its castles were seized by the Hungarian crown. At this point the Teutonic Knights relocated to south-western Prussia. This 'Transylvanian experiment' (Urban, 2003, p. 31) provides the first archaeological example of the Teutonic Order functioning outside the context of the Holy Land, where the construction of castles may be linked to the process of colonisation. Our understanding of the nuances of German colonisation in Transylvania will invariably develop with further excavation and specialist (e.g. palaeoenvironmental, isotopic) research. However, this group is well documented historically and preserved not only their distinctive identity within the greater Hungarian kingdom, but also maintained contacts with core German regions (Keene, 2009, p. 10).

The archaeology of *Ostsiedlung* is above all concerned with colonisation and the development of medieval German culture, commonly referred to by modern scholars as *Kulturmission*. Although there was no unified German identity with a sense of collective destiny comparable to later nationalism, regions within the Holy Roman Empire shared related dialects, social customs and a distinct political community (Scales, 2005; Schmieder, 2009). But even if regional linguistic complexity did not promote a sense of 'Germanness', it did contribute to developing the infrastructure of international trade and transport in the Baltic, and this is perhaps why merchants and crusaders were able to work together so closely beyond the Empire. In contrast, the inability of priests to communicate the message of Christianity effectively to their Prussian congregations represented a significant obstacle to the process of religious conversion. In the southern Baltic, the process of colonisation was preceded by military conquests, political reorganisation and a process of Christianisation. It was also paralleled by the actions of Slavic groups, especially the Polish kings and the Dukes of Gdańsk. During this process associations between warfare and religion framed in the ideology of holy war were reinforced by the political and religious reorganisation of Christianised society. In Transylvania, colonisation also saw the consolidation of Christian territory at the frontier with pagan societies. The presence of the Teutonic Order expressed, implicitly at least, the crusading ideology of safeguarding Christendom. The Hungarian King Andrew II was himself an important figure in the eastern European crusading movement (Laszlovszky & Soós, 2001, p. 321). In Prussia, the transition from pre-Christian to Christian culture is evident in the archaeological record, with both similarities and differences in how this process occurred compared to other colonised regions.

The final phase of Prussian strongholds

Peter of Dusburg's account spanning events over 50 years is littered with destroyed and hastily rebuilt fortifications. Peter presents this holy war as a sustained 'total war', describing numerous episodes of destruction, mass-slaughter and torture on both sides (Trupinda, 1999, p. 122). Archaeologically, a cultural transformation is evident, but at a relatively low resolution. Excavations across northern Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast have identified a number of strongholds with multiple phases of occupation spanning several centuries (see also chapter 2). Their identity as Slavic or Prussian is one which is not always easy to ascertain, especially in frontier regions, but this is usually suggested by location, associated place names and material culture (Długokęcki, 2009a). The impact of the crusades can be linked with a chronological hiatus representing the final occupation phases of many Prussian strongholds. This latest phase of Prussian settlement is often derived from the dating of strongholds because these are the best archaeologically known early-medieval sites, and also represent the centres of political organisation. Hence, settlements attached to Jeziorko have been dated to the thirteenth century, as well as at Rogale and in Pańska Wola (Ostrów) (Białuński, 1996, p. 21). Unfortunately, this level of chronological resolution is relatively poor and sites are assumed to have been abandoned as a result of the crusades if they lack late-medieval material culture. Other types of settlement are poorly known and their occupation phases are often constructed on the basis of broad ceramic typologies, sometimes only from sporadic finds recovered during field walking.

As shown in chapter 2, several excavated strongholds have indicated earlier abandonment, prior to the crusades, and perhaps as the result of Polish or Rus' military activity. The limited human activity in parts of Galindia after the eleventh century, resulting from some internal demographic or economic crisis, has been connected with Polish and later Danish incursions (Wróblewski *et al.*, 2003, p. 168; see also chapter 2), although some areas continued to be occupied. Settlement around Rydzewo and Wierciejki survived into the crusading period and out of those sites yielding early-medieval ceramics, only Grzegorz, Skomack Wielki and the stronghold at Święta Góra/Staświny have yielded late-medieval material suggesting some form of continued occupation into the period of colonisation (Białuński, 1996, p. 20). To the south-east, the abandonment or destruction of Slavic strongholds on the border between Poland and Belarus can be linked to the territorial ambitions of Rus' princes in the early decades of the eleventh century. However, the resolution of the last phase of occupation of these strongholds remains relatively unclear, and the relative chronology assembled from the fragmentary datable evidence makes associations between strongholds and nearby settlement areas difficult to ascertain. For example, at Zajączki in Podlasie, a fortified site encircled by a stone-lined earthen embankment crowned with a timber wall dates to the end of the tenth/start of eleventh century AD. Nearby is a settlement with occupation

phases from the Neolithic to the Early Medieval Period. The stronghold was burned and abandoned in the eleventh century, but there are clear signs of reoccupation from the end of the twelfth/beginning of the thirteenth century. The destruction of the stronghold at Krasna Wieś (Boćki district) in the early-thirteenth century has been linked to the invasion of Rus' princes or the Tartar invasions in 1240–1252. The Sudovian stronghold complex at Jegliniec abandoned in the thirteenth century may have suffered a similar fate (see also chapter 2) and, by the end of the crusading era, the Order's territory – on parchment – stretched to Sudovia. This region became a largely depopulated frontier, part of the 'Great Wilderness'.

In summary, there is very little evidence for the continued occupation of Prussian stronghold sites into the fourteenth century. The Teutonic Order secured its conquered territories with fortifications. Based on Peter of Dusburg's account, it is widely believed that many of these were constructed directly on top of destroyed Prussian strongholds. If this assumption is justified, it would add another layer of sites to the final phase of thirteenth-century Prussian culture. However, verifying the re-use of earlier structures by the Teutonic Order – both in Prussia and Livonia – remains one of the most tantalising archaeological problems in the eastern Baltic.

The earliest strongholds and castles built by the Teutonic Order in Prussia

Archaeology has contributed significantly to our understanding of where and how fortified structures were built in Prussia during and after the crusades.¹ The Teutonic Order sponsored the construction of earthen-timber fortifications with embankments but, until its entry into Prussia, its members did not have much experience of the indigenous tradition of building embankment-based fortifications (Arszyński, 2000). In the Holy Land, masons employed by the Order developed existing castles already constructed out of locally quarried stone, in a very different environmental context to the one encountered in Prussia, where clay and timber were far more readily available. There is no evidence of this in Transylvania, where the Order was initially allowed to build timber fortifications (*castra lignea*), but had them constructed from stone (Laszlovszky & Soós, 2001, p. 323). Excavations at the castle in Feldioara did not identify any earlier timber phase, but uncovered a substantial stone foundation that has been linked with the Order's brief presence at the site in the early-thirteenth century (Pluskowski *et al.*, 2010a).

As a result, there must have been a rapid assimilation of Prussian, Slavic and Germanic fort-building techniques in the early stages of castle building by the Order in Prussia. Indeed, Peter of Dusburg had described all fortified structures whether constructed by the Teutonic Order, Pomeranians, Masovians or Prussians as *castra* (s. *castrum*), with associated settlements referred to as *suburbium* and *preurbium* (Kowalczyk-Heyman, 2006b), and Polish, Prussian

and the Teutonic Order's timber and earth fortifications are referred to as *grody* (German *Burgwall*) in the archaeological literature, distinguished from the later brick *zamki* or castles (Poliński, 2007b, p. 241; see also chapter 4). Archaeologically, it is possible to distinguish the use of earlier structures, the introduction of transitional fortifications combining the elements of early-medieval strongholds with those of later castles (such as residential towers) and the conventual castle built from more durable materials (Poliński, 2005).

One of the most enduring archaeological questions associated with castle building by the Order in Prussia in both the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries has been the re-use of existing structures (Kochański, 2001, p. 468). This practice is described in Peter's account for a number of the Order's *castra* (Poliński, 2007c, p. 42, note 2), and archaeologically has been attested at a number of sites. The Kulmerland had only recently seen Prussian occupation, and here the Order established its bases on the sites of former Slavic strongholds. This was repeated further down the eastern side of the Vistula valley which had seen extensive Slavic colonisation in previous centuries (see also chapter 2). Excavations at the Order's castles in Toruń (Thorn), Pokrzywno (Engelsburg) and Rogózno (Rogasen) also revealed earlier, Slavic timber-earth structures dating to the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth century (*ibid.*, p. 45; see also below). At the stronghold of Zamkowa Góra in Stary Dzierzgoń (Old Christburg), recent excavations led by Daniel Gazda uncovered both Prussian and Teutonic Order material culture (Gazda, 2011), and German archaeologists working at the site in the 1930s had speculated it was re-fortified in 1230 in response to the threat from the crusading host, but the Order successfully attacked and occupied the stronghold (Szczepeński, 2008; see also below). Preliminary field investigations at Rejsyty, a stronghold near Elbląg (Elbing), revealed fragments of medieval greyware and a paved surface suggesting the Teutonic Order may have utilised this earthwork but, without further excavation, it has not been possible to sequence the occupation phases (Jaszczyński, pers. comm.).

In the case of Malbork (Marienburg) castle, fragments of Prussian and Pomeranian ceramic have been recovered from the outer bailey, but without any evidence of a cultural layer denoting sustained occupation. Coring and geophysical survey in the high castle courtyard, the earliest phase of the complex, revealed deep stratigraphy with cultural layers evident at a depth of 3–4m (Figure 3.2). The identity of these has yet to be confirmed with excavation (see also chapter 4). At Königsberg, the Order's castle is assumed to have been constructed on the site of the stronghold of Tuwangste, and this has been partially verified archaeologically by excavations in Kaliningrad (Kulakov, 1999; see also below), whilst other Sambian strongholds have yielded both Prussian and Teutonic Order material (Wendt, 2011). The re-use of early-medieval earthworks was not only confined to the Order's early fortifications, but can also be seen in subsequent centuries. The procurator's residence at Pień constructed in the early-fifteenth century was built directly on top of a mound that



FIGURE 3.2 Schematic representation of the stratigraphy in the courtyard of the high castle of Malbork, based on a 3m core taken in 2010. A second core was taken in 2011 confirming occupation sequences in the courtyard down to a depth of at least 4m. The layers of sand are most likely associated with multiple phases of levelling

may have been occupied into the thirteenth century (see below and chapter 8). Whilst there are certainly instances of re-used sites, there are also examples of newly constructed buildings on fresh, unoccupied sites. Moreover, not every former, strategically located stronghold was utilised as in the case of Baldram, 3km north of Marienwerder (Kwidzyn) and abandoned before the Crusade.

In general, the origins of the majority of thirteenth-century fortifications remain poorly understood. However, what is clear from detailed regional studies (e.g. Poliński's on the Kulmerland; 2003) is that the construction of fortifications in the thirteenth century was tailored to the specific needs of the Order's garrisons and associated settlements. This accounts for the variety of forms, some of which included adaptations of earlier structures and a number of which were not remodelled as conventual castles (Poliński, 2007c, p. 56). These included relatively simple, moat and embankment ring-works enclosing a courtyard with a timber-framed building constructed on stone foundations. Some had fortified outer baileys; others contained mottes of various sizes. Occasionally gate house or perimeter towers were located at the edge of embankments (Kowalczyk-Heyman, 2006b, p. 224). From

the onset, these comparatively simple structures functioned as key centres of administration, managing the Order's newly acquired rural estates and also serving as hunting lodges (Kochański, 2001). Once some political and economic stability had been established in Prussia, castles began to be built and rebuilt from more durable materials, although even before 1280 there is evidence of stone being combined with brick (*ibid.*, p. 469), whilst timber and earth structures continued to be built by the Order into the fifteenth century (Poliński, 2007a, p. 241). Unfortunately, virtually nothing is known about the organisation of space in these early castles from the fragmentary archaeological record. It is reasonable to speculate the internal organisation of these sites would have been tailored to the specific needs of the garrisons. Peter of Dusburg's descriptions of the Order's thirteenth-century fortifications suggests the brothers did practise a communal lifestyle but, until the development of the conventual castle, it is difficult to describe them as fortified monasteries.

Only once these conventual castles begin to be constructed as a standardised template is it possible to associate them with a corporate institution, in Prussia, modelling itself on a monastic community and promoting the ideology of holy war. Written sources indicate this lifestyle already characterised the Teutonic Order before the onset of the Prussian Crusade; however, it is interesting to consider whether the consolidation of conquered tribal lands, the growth of the Order's resident membership and the development of sustained crusading against Lithuania prompted the creation of a particular identity for the Order reflected in the design of its buildings. Indeed, it would be instructive to compare the *idea* of politics run by the military orders with the physical expression of their identity and political authority in other regions.

The Teutonic Order's castles in Prussia were different to those in the Holy Land and Transylvania. The Order's first rural headquarters at Castellum Regis was held by various secular owners until it was acquired by the Knights in 1220. It consisted of a relatively small enclosure castle with four projecting corner towers and inner vaulted ranges (Boas, 2006, pp. 234–235). The larger castle at Montfort (Starkenber) was situated on a steep mountain spur although not in a particularly strategic location. It had been sold to the Teutonic Order in 1227/1228 who rebuilt it as a large spur castle from large, well-cut, marginally dressed limestone ashlar. The structure was given concentric defences, two moats and, by 1244, was functioning as the Order's administrative headquarters, residence of the Grand Master and treasury (*ibid.*, pp. 6, 127–129) (Figure 3.3). The castle was lost in 1271 and reduced to a complete ruin, and so connections between its internal structure and the development of Prussian Marienburg in the first half of the fourteenth century are improbable. Whilst the Order's Baltic houses may seem reminiscent of Castellum Regis and several overlap chronologically with Montfort, the Prussian conventual castle that would come to typify the Order's brick buildings in the fourteenth century had its own specific prototypes in the Kulmerland (see also chapter 4).



FIGURE 3.3 The Teutonic Order's castle at Montfort (Starkenberg), north Israel (R. Khamissy and A. Boas)

What does link the early castles of the Teutonic Order in Prussia with those in the Holy Land and Transylvania is the practical adaptation to local conditions, combining existing traditions of building with available raw materials and the requirements of the resident community. An acute awareness of the broader landscape is also evident in the strategic location of castles: overlooking rivers, close to or on major routes and making use of the natural topography in much the same way as early-medieval communities had done. Virtually every study of the Teutonic Order's castles and early-medieval strongholds in the southern Baltic draws attention to the topographic context of each site. There is even some evidence the Order utilised old trees as watch towers and fortified points (Poliński, 2007c, p. 43). As in the case of early-medieval Prussian sites, our understanding of the siting and role of both early and later castles will be significantly enhanced through more detailed macro-regional studies encompassing the full range of settlements and landscapes (see Poliński, 2003).

Colonising settlements in thirteenth-century Prussia

The gradual advance of the Teutonic Order through western Prussia and the construction of early castles were accompanied by a process of deliberate and systematic colonisation. The Order enlisted German and Polish peasants to construct settlements and develop their surrounding hinterlands, something that did not happen in Livonia, which only experienced a substantial

immigration of Swedish peasants in the north-west districts of Estonia in the thirteenth century (Blomkvist, 2005, p. 666). However, in Livonia, there is evidence that a cohesive identity *did* eventually begin to emerge amongst the range of German-speaking incomers in towns and castles, creating a distinction between the political elite and much of the indigenous population (*ibid.*, p. 668). Indeed, archaeologists in Latvia and Estonia consistently draw a distinction between the material culture of indigenous and incoming groups in the thirteenth century (Mugurēvičs, 1990; Valk, 2004). On the other hand, some historians, most notably Kaspars Kļaviņš (2006), have argued for the development of a more integrated, collaborative society that arose over the course of the Livonian Crusade. To what extent is this true in Prussia?

Compared to the fourteenth century, the number of colonists coming into Prussia during the period of active crusading was very small, and the majority established themselves within the protected confines of settlements and towns attached to the Teutonic Order's castles. Whilst the organisation of the thirteenth-century crusades in Prussia quickly became the responsibility of the Teutonic Order, these military expeditions were very much a joint effort. Crusading armies consisted of knights from the Empire and other regions of central Europe, including Poland. As a result, the acquisition of property and the foundation of towns in the early decades of the Crusade involved all key participants. For example, Polish princes and the Burgrave of Magdeburg, together with the Order, founded Thorn, Kulm (Chełmno) and Marienwerder (Dygo, 2008b, p. 75). The crusading contingent of Henry III, the Burgrave of Meissen, founded Elbing, whilst the Bohemian King Przemysl Ottokar II contributed to the foundation of Königsberg, although the majority of investment here would come from the Order (Czaja, 2009). Towns were established along regular grids (see also chapter 5) and Peter of Dusburg describes them as having defensive perimeters from their earliest foundation, using the term *menia* and *munitio*, which could refer to timber and earth embankments (Kowalczyk-Heyman, 2006b, p. 223). The relationship between the location of settlements and castles remains to be explored in more detail. Which came first? It has been argued, for example, that the ports that developed during the second half of the thirteenth century, such as Elbing, Balga (Veseloe) and Königsberg, were located on or near earlier trading hubs (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 1997, p. 291). Certainly the location of Königsberg did not offer any military advantages, whilst Balga was situated in an area of relatively dense Prussian settlement (Kulakov, 1999, pp. 162–163). Even where the Order constructed their castles in areas of existing settlement, these were eventually re-founded as planned towns with official rights.

From the onset of the Crusade, the Order encouraged individual knights to promote the process of colonisation in the Kulmerland and Pomesania following military conquest. In 1233, the Order built a watch tower 4km north of Marienwerder which three years later was given to the German Knight Dietrich of Tiefenau, along with 300 *Hufen* (one *Hufen* or hide is around 40 acres), a

sizeable amount of land for a colonising settlement. By the end of the decade this was augmented with additional territory between Marienwerder and Christburg (Dygo, 2008b, p. 77). Excavations at the settlement revealed that the main tower of Dietrich's stronghold, framed by posts with walls of tightly packed oak beams, appears to have combined the functions of a residence, defensive keep and observation post (Figure 3.4). The site only functioned up to the First Prussian Uprising (1242–1249) after which it was destroyed, although occupation may have continued for a few more decades (Hafka, 2007). Only a few nobles settled further north in the 1240s, mostly on estates of 40 *Hufen* as provided for in the Charter of Kulm, except for a few poor knights who were given only two to four *Hufen*. Of the hundred or so nobles who accepted fiefs in Prussia before 1280, many died without heirs or were killed in the fighting. After 1280, there was more need for taxes than military service, so few new estates were granted and larger holders were encouraged to break up their estates among their heirs or deed them to the Prussian Church (Urban, 2000, p. 356).

The next phase of colonisation within the territories of the Order, as well as the dioceses of Warmia and Pomesania, only began after the suppression of the Great Prussian Uprising. The first peasant settlements are documented from the 1280s, a process which intensified by the end of the thirteenth century. For example, between 1296 and 1308, 20 new settlements were established around the Elbląg upland, whilst Sieghard of Schwarzburg founded a dozen colonies around Saalfeld (Zalewa) in an area partly occupied by Prussian settlements (Długokęcki, 2009b, pp. 200–201). Few colonists took their own

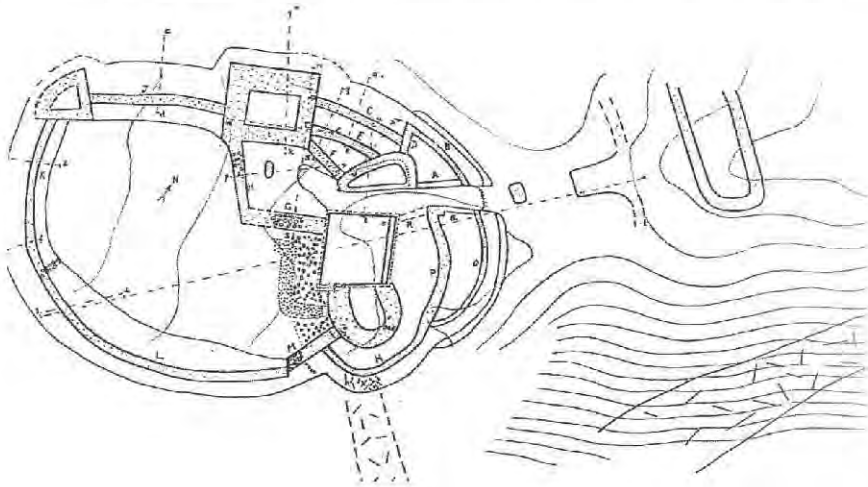


FIGURE 3.4 Plan of the excavated residence associated with Dietrich of Tiefenau at Podzamcze near Kwidzyn (Marienwerder) (aft. Heym's diagram of 1930 in Hafka, 2007)

initiative; all settlements were planned and financed by new landlords, whilst their appointed locators travelled to recruit settlers, and to ensure that key occupations were represented in each colony such as smiths, millers, bakers and priests. Incentives included a large farm free from taxes for several years followed by lower permanent taxes, as well as aid with constructing dwellings and tilling land. Taxes stipulated by the Kulm Law consisted of a tithe of a measure of wheat and rye, and an annual tax of one-half Mark per *Hufen*. The requirement to pay taxes in coin prompted colonists and native Prussians to produce a surplus for sale, in turn stimulating two-way local trade (Urban, 2000, p. 359).

Buschinger and Olivier (2007, p. 131) estimate that between 10,000 to 15,000 colonists came to the lands occupied by the Order and Prussian bishops at the turn of the fourteenth century, primarily focused on the Kulmerland, the lower Vistula and the coastal zone leading up to the Sambian Peninsula. They were largely Silesians and Germans from Brandenburg and Lübeck, with some individuals coming from Scandinavia and Holland. The southern regions were settled by many Poles, especially around Kulm (Urban, 2000, p. 353). In general, the colonists were directed to uncultivated land, mimicking trends in Silesia, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg and Pomerania. There is also documented evidence of resettlement. The Bartians were resettled in Pogesania at the end of the thirteenth century following an alliance with the Teutonic Order (*ibid.*, pp. 332–333). Individual settlements were organised (and reorganised) under a series of laws, two drawn from the Holy Roman Empire – the Madgeburg and Lübeck Laws – and two particular to Prussia – the Kulm Law and the Prussian Law (*Iura Prutenorum*). The latter governed settlements of indigenous Prussians, who were treated differently to incoming Christian colonists. There is in fact relatively little written data on the ethnic diversity within medieval Prussian settlements and disagreement between scholars on the levels of segregation. In the commandery of Balga and in Sambia it appears that Prussians also lived in settlements under the Kulm Law, and in the latter region they even functioned as colony locators (Długokęcki, 2009b, p. 205). This is perhaps one important area where future archaeological research has the potential to further our understanding of the impact of the Crusade on the indigenous population.

The archaeology of Prussian colonisation

The location of the colonies established during the course of the Prussian Crusade is well known from documentary sources. The majority of these associated with castles would later develop into towns and these are treated separately in chapter 5. Colonising or reorganised rural settlements in medieval Prussia, on the other hand, are virtually unknown archaeologically. An exceptional case is the site of Biała Góra, although no internal settlement plan has yet been identified. There are two problems associated with the material traces of the thirteenth-century phase of colonisation. First, many of the colonies have

remained relatively small villages and have not been subject to the same intensity of excavation as larger towns. Archaeologists have also not been particularly interested in excavating these villages from a research perspective, choosing to focus their attention on castles, churches and urban centres. In other instances, small rural holdings such as a *Vorwerk* may have been significantly modified by post-medieval development. Indeed, the majority of these rural colonies have no reported excavations and where there has been rescue archaeology it is usually unpublished or confined to the largely inaccessible body of regional grey literature (Sawicki, pers. comm.). Exceptions to this are an increasing tendency to put interim reports of even small archaeological projects online, and the planned publication of major rescue excavations associated with motorway construction, both in North Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast. As a result, the next decade should see new archaeological data on settlement in medieval Prussia entering the public domain. The second problem concerns the difficulty of dating the transition from early- to late-medieval material culture at a high resolution. This has been attempted through the use of ceramics and coins, as well as building materials such as timber and brick. Radiocarbon dating is usually not precise enough to separate the middle decades of the thirteenth century from the earlier, final phase of Prussian occupation. The dating of Prussian sites remains an ongoing issue that will be gradually resolved with the development of new dating technologies, although the most precise and reliable dates have been provided by dendrochronology.

Ceramics

There is a disparity between the detailed written sources providing specific dates for various battles, insurrections, castle and town foundations and datable archaeological material recovered from the former territory of Prussia. As mentioned in chapter 2, the latest phase of Prussian ceramics has a very broad chronological range due to its conservative nature, i.e. from the eleventh (or earlier) through to the thirteenth century. In some parts of Prussia this type of ceramic may have continued to be produced into the late-medieval period, but this chronology would need to be refined with the additional dating techniques. In the borderlands of Prussia, including western Pomesania, Slavic ceramic forms are of course known but assigning an ethnicity to fragments is not always possible and they are simply referred to as ‘traditional’ with a date range of the eleventh to thirteenth century (Poliński, 1996; see also Wróblewski & Nowakiewicz, 2003). Masovian ceramics dated from the twelfth to mid-thirteenth century are represented by fully turned vessels with a strongly marked neck; in the southern Kulmerland they have a strongly marked belly and from the second half of the twelfth century to the start of the thirteenth they are typically thin-walled vessels. These have been regularly used to date strongholds in the Kulmerland, alongside an extensive programme of radiocarbon dates (Chudziak, 1994). The absence of typical Prussian ceramics

or their presence in very small quantities in what are otherwise defined as Slavic sites cannot definitively exclude the presence of a mixed Slavic–Prussian community as opposed to trade between the two groups. Linguistically, the two groups were separated, but there is evidence for interaction between Masovians, Pomeranians, Scandinavians, Germans and Prussians.

New types of ceramic form appear after the crusading period (Figure 3.5). The technology associated with their production was brought with colonists and can sometimes be sourced to their geographical origin, from Silesia through to the eastern regions of the Holy Roman Empire. These types of ‘greyware’ are all wheel-thrown, slender and variously decorated. They vary in colour depending on soil conditions from paler through to darker shades deriving from clay with a mixture of fine sand and medium-grained quartz. The colour itself and the contrast with Baltic ware can be related to a different technology, where vessels were fired in a reductive atmosphere. This technology does appear earlier on the fringes of Prussian lands, evident in the Kulmerland from the first half of the twelfth century. However, it is far more typical of the period of colonisation (Poliński, 1996). The largest and most studied assemblages of greyware from a single site have been recovered from excavations in Elbląg, where in late-thirteenth-century contexts their dating has been supported by dendrochronology (Marcinkowski, 2003b). Here, one of the earliest structures associated with ceramic production was a pottery kiln uncovered in the north-east part of the town near the defensive earthen embankment. Nearby were the remains of a timber house, which dated this complex to the turn of the 1280s until 1288, when it was destroyed by fire. A total of 82,451 ceramic fragments of wheel-thrown, mostly flat-bottomed ‘greyware’ were recovered from the site, including pots, jugs, bowls, plates, covers, lamps, spindle whorls and fishing net weights. They were made with slide-tape technology and fired at a temperature of 900°C (Nawrońska, 2006, p. 396). The general absence of spherical bottoms, a form associated with Westphalia and the Rhineland, suggests the potter came from Thuringia through Silesia or from Upper Saxony (*ibid.*, p. 400). In the Kulmerland, new ceramic forms appear in the 1230s and can be used to date the first phase of settlement until *c.* 1343, with subsequent changes in pottery use coinciding with major political shifts (Poliński, 1996; 2003, p. 21). At a number of sites virtually complete vessels have been recovered indicating a diverse spectrum of shapes and sizes, as at Kwidzyn. It is clear that a range of ceramic forms was in use, alongside wooden dishes that rarely survive, but the diversity of functions remains a matter of speculation. A pilot project utilising the isotopic analysis of residues from medieval ceramics recovered from the settlement at Biała Góra (see below) was undertaken by Lisa-Marie Shillito at the University of York in 2012, and may provide more detailed information about vessel use.

In Gdańsk, the ceramic reference collection and its detailed typology was developed by Bogdan Kościński after several decades of excavation. Early ceramic fragments from the ninth and tenth centuries are typically Pomeranian hand-made wares and partly finished on a turntable, bi-conical in form and



(a)



(b)

FIGURE 3.5 Medieval 'greyware' ceramic vessels recovered from excavations in Kwidzyn (Marienwerder) now on display in the castle museum (a) and *in situ* in a pit at the site of Biała Góra (site 1) (b), less than 25km to the north

open-fired. In the tenth century, a broader range of ceramic forms, thrown on a faster wheel, are increasingly evident, with fine-grained temper and thinner walls. They are accompanied by potters' marks and a standardisation of vessel forms and decoration. At the start of the thirteenth century, greyware begins to appear in archaeological contexts, as well as new vessel forms typical of northern Germany. By the mid-thirteenth century, specialised ceramics had taken over the market, displacing earlier traditions; glazed vessels and pottery become more common from the latter half of the fifteenth century (Paner, 2006, p. 418). Other ceramic forms associated with colonisation have been studied at Kołobrzeg, where greywares appear from the mid-thirteenth century (Rębkowski, 1995). Elbląg, Gdańsk and Kołobrzeg represent the key sites where ceramic typologies associated with the colonising period have been most developed. Elsewhere, dating schemes are not always clear and have been disputed (Kowalczyk-Heyman, 2006b, p. 224, note 22). This is particularly the case where ceramic fragments do not display decorative elements, such as parts of the base and, as a result, they are identified on the basis of their colour, texture, thickness and composition as seen in the cross-section. Moreover, the shift from early- to late-medieval, locally produced wares remains to be studied beyond the major urban enclaves.

This type of ceramic continues in use, in Prussia, until the sixteenth century when it becomes replaced with early modern wares, although it is possible to differentiate thirteenth-century vessels from late-medieval ones on the basis of their form and particularly their thickness. The greyware produced within Prussia is also widely referred to as 'Teutonic Order ceramics' (Polish *krzyżacka ceramika*), although this merely identifies it with the period of the Teutonic Order's state, since brothers of the Order were themselves not involved in the manufacture of ceramics. However, there is an ethnic association with this greyware. This form was introduced by colonists and is found in settlements of all types, from castles and towns through to rural manors and villages. It is so distinctive and so different from earlier Baltic ceramics, that it is routinely used to identify the presence of the Teutonic Order, colonists associated with the Order's state or trade between the local indigenous community and the Order or incoming colonists. In this respect this differentiation has been extremely useful for understanding the impact of the crusades on Prussian society, although the nuances are particular to each site. For example, in 2011, excavations at the Galindian stronghold in Święta Góra uncovered a feature with a fragment of greyware, suggesting that the site may have been occupied into the crusading period and during the construction of the Order's castle at Lötzen (Giżycko), perhaps even reflecting trade between the Prussian community and the Order's settlement (see below).

It is easier to identify imported ceramics that have been studied and typologised in some detail, particularly by David Gaimster (for a good summary see Gaimster, 2011). The most commonly occurring imported ceramic in Prussia is 'redware' originating from the Rhineland and it is largely found at town

sites, rather than in castles (see also chapter 5). Interestingly in North Livonia (southern Estonia), excavations at castles rarely produce local wares but instead are dominated by imports, suggesting some form of segregation from the indigenous population (Valk, pers. comm.). This may reflect the ethnic differences between Prussia and Livonia that develop following the crusades. The relationship between the incomers and the indigenous Prussian tribes is by no means a closed matter, and archaeology can potentially significantly contribute to furthering our understanding of the ethnic changes that took place as a result of the crusades.

To date, some systematic studies of medieval ceramics from Prussia have been conducted on material from major town excavations (e.g. Gdańsk, Elbląg and Toruń), but no systematic study for the Order's state has been attempted. The issue of chronology could potentially be resolved through a combination of absolute dating methods focusing on discrete contexts or features from a range of sites within each commandery. This includes using coins contained within ceramic vessels to provide them with a more specific chronological context, in other words *a terminus post quem* (Januskiewicz & Odoj, 1997, p. 206). Using a similar approach it would be equally useful to identify where, and for how long, indigenous ceramic traditions persisted. There is also evidence for combined forms as an expression of cultural hybridity referred to as 'transitional' wares, although the extent to which surviving indigenous communities adopted the new forms may be difficult to demonstrate. Wheel-thrown technology was known in Prussia before the crusades, but it is likely that with the introduction of new technology came the gradual abandonment of the old ceramic tradition, resulting in regionally standardised products. Clearly questions concerning the relationship between the colonising and the colonised will have to be approached from multiple perspectives. Dariusz Poliński (2006) has also drawn attention to the problems of late-medieval ceramic typology in the Kulmerland, although this is also an issue for the Prussian interior (Auch & Nowakiewicz, 2009).

In summary, ceramic vessels from the Teutonic Order's state are routinely recovered from archaeological sites in North Poland, the Kaliningrad and western Lithuania, and remain an extensive and potentially valuable resource within museums. Moreover, as one of the most abundant artefact types, ceramics will remain the main source for dating medieval sites in Prussia. Where pottery occurs with coins, timbers that can be dated with dendrochronology or material that can be radiocarbon-dated such as seeds recovered from secured contexts, it is possible to refine the chronology of its broader group (Poliński, 2006, pp. 171–172). Coins provide the second most common means of dating sites in the Order's state, but they occur sporadically and relatively infrequently compared to pottery.

Coins

The Order was organised enough in the mid-thirteenth century to start minting its own coins, specifically for use within its Kulmerland territories (for the

most detailed synthetic work on the Order's coins with a full chronology see Paszkiewicz, 2009; Waschinski, 1934). These coins are relatively simple, small bracteates stamped with the cross of the Order on one side, although given the thinness of the metal this symbol was also visible on the reverse side. They have been used to date the earliest phases of sites (e.g. Kaldus, see below) within the developing *Ordensstaat* and support the notion that crusading, colonisation and a supporting infrastructure went hand in hand from the earliest years of the Crusade. A fully functioning monetary economy took several decades to develop (see also chapter 4). The Prussian use of raw precious metals as a form of currency was supplemented by the Order's coins. Ingots, valued by weight, continued to be used alongside coins in the late-thirteenth century, whilst the documented use of coins significantly increases in the Order's state from the fourteenth century as evidence for payment in raw silver and gold vanishes (Paszkiewicz, 2009, pp. 55–56). The form of the cross on the Order's early coins points to iconographic influences from northern France and its early adoption on one of the most important expressions of the Order's identity can be directly linked to the crusading ideology of the military orders. Coins found on medieval sites from the mid-thirteenth century are used for both dating and defining the presence of, or contact with, the Teutonic Order.

Dendrochronology

Timber structures often survive in the flooded soils of the southern Baltic, and sometimes these can be dated using dendrochronology. In the case of the Teutonic Order's castles, timber was widely used to provide stable foundations in waterlogged terrain, and in a number of instances fragments of palisades, walls and bridges have been recovered from these sites. At the castle of Tuchola (Tuchel), excavations in the dry moat between the high and middle castles uncovered transverse timber structures used to strengthen the waterlogged soil. Excavations in Malbork castle have uncovered parts of wooden bridges and foundation posts. However, the most extensive dendrochronological sequence in Prussia comes from the early phase of Elbląg (see also chapter 5). Castles, town buildings and churches constructed especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are more regularly dated by their architectural elements, particularly the morphology of their bricks.

Brick

Brick is used in Prussia as a building material from the mid-thirteenth century and the earliest examples are defined by their size. Large bricks were being introduced across central Europe by the Cistercians, Dominicans and Franciscans, appearing in Masovia in the first half of the thirteenth century (Brykowska, 2002, p. 33). Brick was also increasingly used across Poland at this time and the reign of King Casimir the Great (1333–1370) saw an intense period of building and upgrading earlier structures in this medium (Wyrobisz, 1963, pp. 67–69). Late medieval

bricks tend to be smaller. In Gdańsk (Danzig), for example, from the fourteenth to fifteenth century their thickness changed from 10.5cm to 6–7cm, their width from 15–16cm to 12cm and their length from 32–33cm to 26–27cm (Paner, 2001, p. 499). One of the few written references to brick morphology comes from 1423, when the Grand Master specified a standard for brick size, translated as $30 \times 15 \times 7.5$ cm. However, the general assumption that bricks become increasingly smaller from the fourteenth century has been challenged. Comparative studies of thirteenth- to sixteenth-century brick structures in Greater Poland demonstrated that establishing a regional chronology was problematic, and that the use of bricks for dating should be focused on individual structures and their vicinity (Żemigła, 2008), although no comparable studies statistically mapping brick morphology on medieval Prussian sites have been published. In some cases, as in Tczew (Dirschau), there is an evident mixture of brick sizes incorporated within the same phase of building which makes dating on the basis of morphology problematic and also draws attention to the importance of sourcing building materials. Another possibility is that different teams worked on multiple parts of a castle simultaneously, resulting in composite styles which are contemporary with each other rather than diachronic. Were bricks produced locally or imported from nearby or distant brickyards? The style of laying bricks, where they have survived intact *in situ*, has also traditionally been assigned a relative chronology. The thirteenth-century Wendish bond – bricks laid in sequences of two stretchers and a single header – was slowly replaced by the Dutch/Flemish bond in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (earlier in southern Poland), which consisted of alternate headers and stretchers, with subsequent courses offset to position headers between stretchers. However, evident regional differences invite more detailed investigation. Dating bricks would perhaps be most useful where they are discovered in archaeological contexts, providing there is comparative reference material from nearby structures and there are broad differences between thirteenth-century and later bricks. Prussian bricks have not been subjected to any thermoluminescence or re-hydroxilation dating (Wilson *et al.*, 2009), and it may be possible to refine their chronology in the future. Although primarily used for dating, hand-made bricks can also provide important information on the process of construction, as well as indirect evidence of the nearby presence of plant material and animals. Impressions of paw prints, largely made by dogs and cats, have been observed at a number of sites (e.g. Radzyń Chełmiński, Malbork).

Other forms of dating

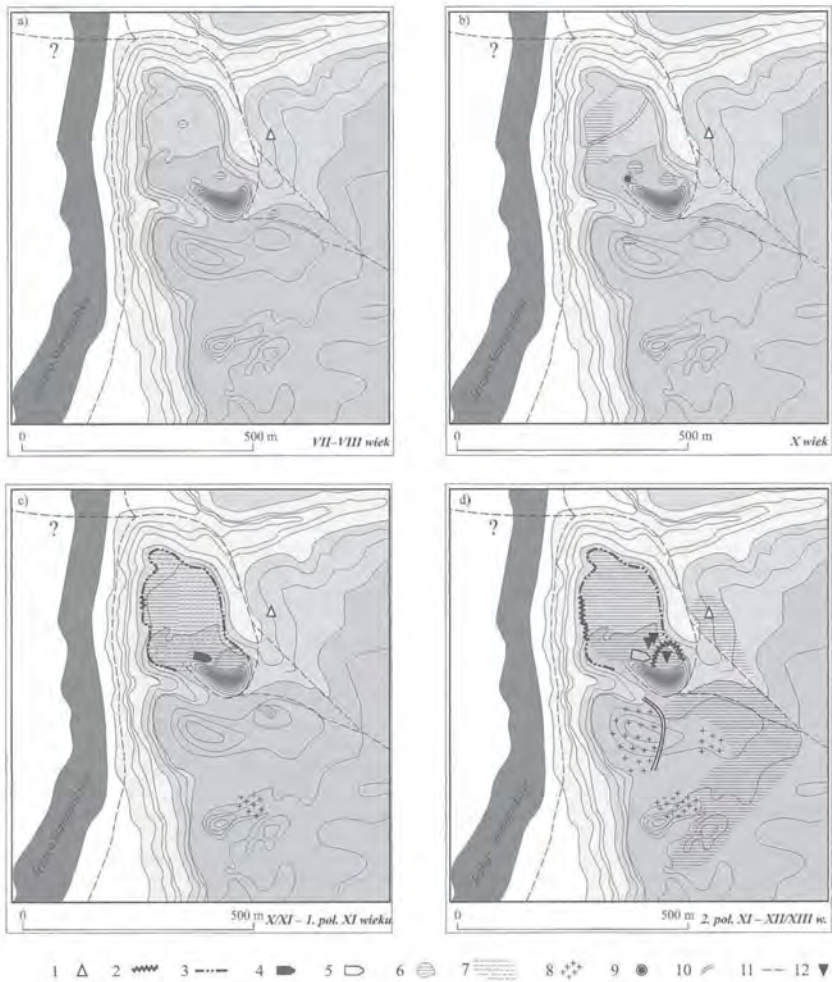
A range of artefacts has also been used to provide comparatively specific and broad date ranges. These include iron caulking clamps, stirrups, jewellery and dress accessories deposited in graves, as well as weapons and armour. They also include architectural elements, which are dated according to similar forms in neighbouring regions, particularly in eastern Germany. The use of brick and stone in building construction in Prussia is predominantly associated with the

incoming colonists; Prussian use of stone was restricted to some house foundations and occasionally as preparation surfaces under floors within dwellings, particularly in Sambia (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 1983, p. 104). Certain artefacts were also introduced which were not used by the indigenous Prussians, such as horse shoes (*ibid.*, p. 221). As with ceramics, the most detailed artefact typologies are based on major urban assemblages and, particularly for the early-medieval period, cemeteries.

The development of the Teutonic Order's state in the thirteenth century is marked by the establishment of strongholds/castles and settlements which varied regionally. This, in turn, was related to the direction and progress of the Crusade. The most important sites are outlined below, grouped according to region, whilst the process of urbanisation is covered in more detail in chapter 5.

The Kulmerland: the first frontier

From both an archaeological and historical perspective, the Kulmerland is one of the most intensively studied regions of the early-medieval Slavic-Prussian frontier and the subsequent Teutonic Order's state (Figure 3.6). The proto-urban centre at Culmine (Kaldus) was abandoned in the early-thirteenth century, although there is no definite evidence that it was ever the target of Prussian incursions. Settlement and communications in the Kulmerland at this time were administered by a dozen strongholds, although only the site at Kulm itself possessed what can be described as urban features (Poliński, 2003, p. 129). The development of the legal and provisioning infrastructure set up by the Order along the Vistula and lower Osa was in fact a continuation of the initiatives taken by the bishops of Płock and Włocław (Biskup, 2002a, p. 132). In the Kulmerland, Konrad of Masovia and the Bishop of Płock handed over territories and sites to Christian in the early-thirteenth century, including *quondam castra* (former castles). Between 10 and 12 strongholds dating to this period have been identified archaeologically and with the documented sources the total amount may have been between 14 and 20 (Poliński, 2003, p. 128; but see also Janowski, 2007). The crusades of 1222 and 1223 succeeded in only temporarily restoring Masovian control over the Kulmerland; Prussian raids struck again the following year. In 1226 or 1228, a small fortification was constructed opposite the stronghold of Postolsco, manned by a garrison of two Teutonic Knights and named Vogelsang. This was overwhelmed by a Prussian army and prompted the rebuilding of the stronghold at Nessau (Nieszawa) on the southern bank of the Vistula; no traces of the earlier fortification have been found at the site of the castle constructed in the mid-fourteenth century (Poliński, 2007, pp. 43, 50-51; Dygo, 2008b, p. 64). The following year, the Order constructed a stronghold on the other side of the Vistula at Thorn, which soon stimulated the growth of the town. In 1236, the town and the fortification were relocated 10km to a location less prone to flooding (Czaja,



Kaldus, Kujavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship. Subsequent development phases of the Kaldus settlement complex in the Early Medieval Period. Legend: 1 – erratic stone; 2 – dyke; 3 – supposed dyke; 4 – basilica; 5 – the ruins of the basilica; 6 – settlement limits; 7 – supposed settlement limits; 8 – graves; 9 – supposed offertory site; 10 – ditch; 11 – roads; 12 – horse burials (acc. to W. Chudziak 2003)

FIGURE 3.6 The chronology of the settlement complex at Kaldus in the Kulmerland; (a) seventh to eighth century; (b) tenth century; (c) tenth to first half of eleventh century; (d) second half of eleventh century to twelfth/thirteenth century (aft. Chudziak, 2003 in Makowiecki, 2010, p. 29)

2009, p. 179). This was the beginning of a surge of building military installations which also served as administrative centres and stimulated settlement development.

The construction of fortifications was strategic, particularly in the area of the Drwęca in the commandery of Strasburg and Gollub which bordered with the Dobrin Land and Masovian territory. By the end of the thirteenth century, a large number of *castra* had been built in a relatively small area (Gancewski, 2001, p. 14). The subsequent process of colonisation reinforced the Order's defence network around the River Osa. The earliest castles were offensive structures, aimed at securing territorial gains and facilitating Christianisation. They had to be built quickly and there is evidence that existing indigenous timber constructions were re-used and incorporated into the Order's new fortifications. The Kulmerland continued to be an unstable region for many decades, suffering incursions from Prussians and Lithuanians, the last of which was led by the Sudovians in 1277. The migration of German settlers into the Kulmerland only really began in the late 1280s (Biskup, 2002, p. 132). In this first phase of colonisation from 1230–c.1343, 328 rural settlements are documented in the Kulmerland (Poliński, 2003, p. 10) and, despite continuing hostilities with neighbouring Poland, the Teutonic Order maintained tight political control over this region until 1466. The earliest sites associated with the Order are at Bierzgowo (Birgelau), Grudziądz, Kowalewo Pomorskie (Schönsee), Pokrzywno, Radzyń Chełmiński (site 1) (Rehden), Starogród (Althausen Höhe; part of the Kulm series of sites) and Toruń. These formed important centres at a time when the Kulmerland was governed by a regional commander, a post dissolved in the mid-1330s (*ibid.*, p. 24). Here, only a few sites are discussed in further detail; all were constructed within or in close proximity to earlier Slavic strongholds.

The Kulm Complex: Colmen, in Culmine (Kałdus), Starogród and Kulm (Chełmno)

The final phase of occupation at Kałdus is datable to the second half of the thirteenth century, as suggested by ceramic fragments and a Teutonic Order bracteate (Chudziak, 2003). Historical sources point to Kałdus as the most likely site of the castellan's stronghold of Colmen attached to the settlement in Culmine, which suffered Prussian incursions in the decades leading up to the crusades and throughout the thirteenth century (see also chapter 2). This final phase has been identified with the Order's short-lived stronghold of Potterberg which was dismantled and the materials used to build the fortress at Mewe in 1282 (*ibid.*, p. 179). The *castrum* at Starogród, in close proximity to Kałdus and Chełmno (Kulm), is mentioned in 1232 and quickly became an important administrative centre in the Kulmerland and would become the focus of a commandery. The castle, built on the site from 1244, was dismantled in the eighteenth century with only traces of the moat system evident in

the landscape. Excavations from 1963–1964 revealed fragments of the later structure, but also a layer of clay with traces of wattle that was difficult to positively link to either the early stronghold or the gothic castle (Poliński, 2007b, pp. 45–46). Following the abandonment of the settlement at Kaldus, the Order founded Kulm to the north which would be granted town rights in 1233; a castle garrisoned by the Order was attached to the town by the 1240s. The later castle was dismantled in the eighteenth century but the so-called ‘tower of Mestwin’, which contains late Romanesque elements, is most likely related to this early phase of fortification; it was later incorporated into the Cistercian convent (Mroczo, 1974, p. 286). The town was relocated in 1251 and built using the new ‘Kulm foot’ (28.8cm), situated on an irregularly shaped upland which influenced the town’s plan, enclosed by a circuit of walls constructed from around 1267. The town plan incorporated an existing Dominican church and friary, documented as being present in Kulm from at least 1244 (Mroczo, 1974, p. 286); late Romanesque elements were noted in the porch of the Dominican church (now demolished). The orientation of the church of the Virgin Mary on the other hand, which deviates from the symmetry of the mid-thirteenth century town plan, is suggestive of an earlier structure associated with the first phase of settlement. The church also contains a font from Gotlandic stone which can be dated to *c.*1230 and earlier foundations have been exposed during occasional excavations in the vicinity of the churchyard and street.

Thorn

On the site of the Order’s castle was a Slavic stronghold situated on an outcrop overlooking the Vistula, which appears in the seventh century and is fortified with a timber and earth (sand) embankment in the tenth century. To the west of the stronghold was an associated settlement, the remains of which were largely destroyed during the construction of the castle moat. The stronghold was abandoned at the start of the twelfth century, perhaps as a result of Prussian incursions. However, the settlement appears to have continued in some form into the first half of the thirteenth century. The Order’s first fortification here may have focused on an area of resettlement that has yet to be defined archaeologically. The horseshoe-shaped embankment of the former Slavic stronghold protecting the landward side of the settlement guided the form of the Order’s castle, although this was constructed as an enclosed structure (Chudziakowa, 1983, pp. 17–19). In 1250, the fortification was partly surrounded by a stone wall attached to the main brick castle (Poliński, 2007b, p. 246) and, thirteen years later, a chapel was added to the complex; the whole integrated into the defences of the town.

The town, founded in 1233, was relocated from its original area three years later to the west of the former Slavic stronghold, although it was only granted Kulm rights in 1251 following a fire. Thorn was granted a two-mile stretch

of the Vistula which included five islands and, by the end of the thirteenth century, its property encompassed an area of 5,530 hectares; this included a significant amount of woodland enabling animal husbandry to be developed, particularly goats and pigs, but also horses and cattle, as well as gardens and, on the warmer banks of the Vistula, vineyards (Czacharowski, 1983, p. 37). The Old Town was planned according to the old foot of 31.3cm; the new foot was used in the New Town established in 1264. Peter of Dusburg describes the town as having a *murus* (wall), although it has only been possible to date the earliest surviving fabric of the town wall to the second half of the thirteenth century with an assumption of a preceding timber and earth embankment topped with a palisade (Kowalczyk-Heyman, 2006b, p. 224; Mroczko, 1974, p. 296). Brick walls were constructed around the western and northern sides of the town at the end of the thirteenth century between the Old and New Towns and at the start of the fourteenth century along the riverside; with the exception of this southernmost stretch, the defensive circuit consisted of double walls and a ditch (Czacharowski, 1983, p. 47). The walls were punctuated with towers and gatehouses, of which two were strengthened in the fourteenth century with barbicans. The New Town's walls and three gatehouses were constructed after the Old Town, although both formed a unified, integrated circuit along with the Order's castle.

The presence of burned structures, dating most likely to the 1260s, indicates this oldest part of the town was destroyed by a fire although buildings were quickly replaced. In 1259, permission had been given to construct a trading house, uncovered in the place of the later town hall. This was a 43.5m-long, single-storey building, most likely used by cloth merchants. In 1274, the Order allowed the town to build a second building which contained stalls. The town hall tower began to be constructed at the same time, and the rest of the building followed at the end of the thirteenth century with the construction of a municipal court finishing the complex (*ibid.*, p. 45). Religious institutions appeared quickly. In 1239, a Franciscan convent was established on the western periphery of the town, which constructed its own church dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, of which only a small fragment of the north wall of the presbytery survives. On the northern side of the New Town, the Dominicans established a convent and built the church of St Nicholas (see also chapter 6). The town was served by the parish church of St John the Baptist, initially a timber structure, and from the mid-thirteenth century this was gradually replaced by a brick building. The New Town would have its own parish church dedicated to St James which would only begin to be built in 1309.

Graudenz (Grudziądz)

The Slavic stronghold, situated across an escarpment overlooking the Vistula, may have been occupied into the early-thirteenth century (Poliński, 2003, p. 128). Excavations in 2009 led by Marcin Wiewióra identified multiple

occupation phases within the castle precinct, underneath the Order's brick constructions, dating from at least the seventh to thirteenth century and to earlier prehistory, with recovered ceramic fragments from the Hallstad period. Elements of the early castle from the second half of the thirteenth century were uncovered, as well as the western part of the southern wing of the later castle, which partly collapsed down the escarpment in 1388. In the southern area of the site, there were traces of an intensive early-medieval settlement. This included an area where food was processed, strikingly represented by a compact horizon of fish scales. The stronghold appears to have been levelled by the Order during the construction of the later castle from the mid-thirteenth century, which was built directly on top of previous occupation layers. It consisted of an irregular quadrangle enclosing a courtyard with a concentric tower. The surroundings were also modified in the process, which included deepening existing gullies to the north of the outcrop. The castle was dismantled at the start of the nineteenth century resulting in significant taphonomic disturbance, particularly to occupation deposits dating from the mid-thirteenth to the late-sixteenth century (Wiewióra, 2012). Comprehensive reconstruction and dating of the thirteenth-century site is therefore extremely difficult; much was destroyed by subsequent truncations and some parts cannot be excavated, such as those areas covered by debris from the demolished western tower and the gatehouse which is under the only road leading into the site. However, it appears the early brick castle had an irregular layout, perhaps reminiscent of the Order's castle in Thorn. By the fourteenth century, the complex was separated from – and communicated with – the town below by an outer bailey in its south-eastern corner (Haftka, 1999, p. 120).

Rehden (Radzyń Chełmiński)

The Slavic stronghold at Radzyń (site 2) was occupied from the late-ninth century into the mid-twelfth/early-thirteenth century where a layer of burned timber points to its destruction, most likely by a Prussian attack (Chudziak, 1994). It is possible Peter of Dusburg referred to this stronghold as the *castrum* established by the Order here in 1234. The later castle, built 500m west of the former stronghold, is unlikely to have been built on another earlier stronghold in such close proximity and the brick structure may have been located in relation to the town (Poliński, 2003, pp. 123, 181), but very little has been recovered from this earliest phase in either the castle or the town; most recently excavations within the castle by Daniel Gazda and Marcin Wiewióra revealed post-medieval cellars had truncated earlier phases. The choice to establish a fortified point here was strategic. The site itself was surrounded by wetlands and guarded the frontier between the north-east Kulmerland and Pomesania; however, the extent to which the Knights were drawn to the earlier stronghold remains unclear. It is, however, likely that the Order acquired knowledge of the existing system of fortifications, key communication routes and strategic points

in the landscape from their Masovian allies. The striking red brick castle that survives was largely constructed in the fourteenth century along with significant reshaping of the surrounding landscape to create two moated outer baileys.

Engelsburg (Pokrzywno)

In the second half of the twelfth century until the start of the thirteenth century, there was a Slavic stronghold here, identified as *Copriven* which had been granted to Bishop Christian in 1222 (Haftka, 1999, p. 238). In the process of the construction of the Order's castle, the stronghold was completely destroyed. Excavations within the high castle courtyard revealed early- and late-medieval occupation phases, significantly affected by the building and dismantling of the castle in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Part of a timber and earth embankment in the high castle area may have belonged to the earlier stronghold or the Order's fortification first mentioned in 1237 (Poliński, 2003, p. 208). The brick and stone castle was built in the last quarter of the thirteenth century and functioned as the main seat of the commander of the Kulmerland. The irregularity of the layout of the high castle and its two outer baileys most likely reflects the influence of the topography and the likely siting of the early-medieval stronghold which had been built on an outcrop with steep slopes on its north-eastern and eastern sides, surrounded by two streams and boggy terrain. Surviving fabric from the early castle has been identified by brick typology and architecture, with parts of the eastern wall preserving fragments from the thirteenth-century phase.

Consolidating castles and settlement in the Kulmerland

The majority of castles constructed in the Kulmerland were established as centres of commanderies; indeed, this region had the densest concentration of fortified structures in the Order's state by the end of the thirteenth century (Mroczo, 1974, p. 299). Dariusz Poliński (2007c) has linked the development of castles in the Kulmerland to the changing political and military situation. Until the mid-thirteenth century, this was a very volatile region subject to Prussian and Pomeranian incursions. Many of these early fortifications were destroyed by Prussians, particularly during the 1242–1243 rebellion. The *castrum* at Rogasen (Rogóżno) was given to the Order in 1250–1260 and was strategically situated on the road leading further into Prussian territory. In 1972, traces of a wooden construction were unearthed here, partly destroyed by fire and levelling of the site. The earliest structure, which included a timber and earth embankment, was rebuilt in brick and stone in 1275 (see Poliński, 2003). In the last decade of the thirteenth century, there was more investment in strategic building works reflecting the development of the Order's administration, the need for better defences and an improved economic situation. In 1293–1295, the first timber and earth fortification at

Gollub was constructed and Peter of Dusburg refers to a *castrum* here in 1296. Excavations revealed the remains of a burned layer with charred timber, along with ceramics from the last quarter of the thirteenth century – most likely the remains of the Order's timber and earth embankment. The brick castle was constructed around 1300 (Poliński, 2007a, p. 250). At Papowo Biskupie (Bischöflich Papau), the oldest known regular quadrangular castle in the Order's territories was constructed between 1287 and 1292 from field stones and brick. Although the above-ground fabric is well-preserved, subsequent phases of occupation have destroyed or obscured the earlier deposits (Wiewióra, pers. comm.). Many sites in this densely settled regions have not been investigated in detail. Most recently sustained archaeological investigation in the Kulmerland has focused on the multi-period site of Pień; a stronghold documented as belonging to Bishop Christian until it passed briefly into Pomeranian hands and, from 1248, it is listed as a property of the Teutonic Order. Excavations revealed early-medieval layers and remains of an early-fifteenth-century structure, but whether this site was continuously occupied during the late-thirteenth and fourteenth centuries remains unclear (Poliński, 2007b, p. 333). The process of settlement which increased in the latter decades of the thirteenth century also saw the establishment of private knightly estates. At Bachotek near Zbiczno, the motte was built at the end of the twelfth/start of the thirteenth century and, in the second half of the thirteenth century, a wooden tower serving as a fortified residence was constructed, typical of rural Polish knightly residences and those found in parts of western Europe (Kola, 2002, p. 160).

The Vistula Delta and fens: the frontier with Pomerania

The Vistula Delta or Żuławy Wiślane can be sub-divided into three fen regions: the Żuławy Gdańskie, between Gdańsk and the Vistula; the Żuławy Wielkie or Malborskie, between the Vistula and its tributary the Nogat; and the Żuławy Elbląskie, east of the River Nogat. This was a frontier region from the tenth century, when the expansion of the Piast state prompted the construction of strongholds in the Delta region up to the coast (see also chapter 2). East of the Vistula lay the Prussian tribal territories of Pomesania and Pogesania. It is generally accepted on the basis of archaeological evidence and place names that Prussian occupation of the Delta region was confined to the Nogat and eastwards, although some temporary or small-scale settlement could be found within the Slavic regions to the west. South towards the Kulmerland, Prussian communities were equally sporadic by the thirteenth century, whilst Slavic settlement could be found between the Vistula and Dzierżgoń rivers (Powierski, 2001, pp. 157–158). The most important Slavic centres here were Węgry, near Malbork, and further south the strongholds at Podzamcze and at Kwidzyn (Haftka, 1982). Three Pomeranian strongholds have also been identified on the banks of the lower Dzierżgoń. These differences in material culture on

either side of the Dzierzgoń and the Sztum Forest point to the location of the expanding Slavic westward frontier with Pomesania, with major strongholds from Kwidzyn to Gdańsk connected by roads. The fact that occupation of these sites only continues into the twelfth century may reflect their abandonment in the wake of Prussian incursions several decades before the crusades.

The decline of multi-cultural Truso heralded a more unstable relationship between western Prussians and Slavs (see also chapter 2), which culminated in the appropriation of this territory by the Teutonic Order. The locations of Prussian sites in North Pomesania encountered by crusading armies are referred to in the later chronicles, especially by Peter of Dusburg, but archaeologically there are a series of mounds which could qualify at Kalwie, Stary Targ, Tulice and Minięta; the latter two have not been physically verified and are only known in literature. At the fort in Kalwie, excavations in 1973 revealed two phases of occupation: from the ninth to twelfth century and in the first half of the thirteenth century (Długokęcki & Haftka, 2000, p. 80). Peter describes how a castle (*castrum*) was built near the river Mockera (Postolińska Struga today) along with a watch tower (*propugnacula*) in Stuhm (Sztum), Riesenburg (Prabuty), Obrzynowo and Willenberg (Wielbark). In 1928, a number of mounds in the vicinity were identified by the excavator of Kwidzyn, Waldemar Heym, as 'Prussian', and one as the location of a tower. As the Order moved into the north-east part of the region in the late 1230s, it constructed castles and recycled destroyed Prussian strongholds (Kochański, 2001, p. 467). The complex at Weklice, east of Elbląg, was a crucial defensive point against the Teutonic Order. It consisted of three fortifications situated within a few metres of each other, located on an elevated outcrop. All were dated to the twelfth to thirteenth century, with a noticeable absence of later ceramics. Excavations in 1982–1983 at Weklice 2 (Zamkowa Góra) targeting the main entrance revealed the burned remains of a tower in the outer ramparts, stone foundations under the bridge joists and parts of a building by the embankment and gate tower. Excavations through the inner and outer moats, and the outer embankment, revealed the foundations of a wall constructed from field stones held together with clay which initially covered the top of the embankment. There is nothing that can clearly link these remains with the documented fortifications of the Teutonic Order, although the site was described as having been overrun by the Order after which one of the associated forts was destroyed by the Prussians during the Great Prussian Uprising (Pawłowski, 1991).

The region remained a frontline between Pomeranians and Prussians, both at war with the Order throughout much of the middle decades of the thirteenth century. The most important sites associated with the Order's early phase of colonisation, which have been the focus of archaeological investigations, were Marienwerder, Mewe, Christburg, Biała Góra (tentatively identified as Zantir) and Elbing. All of these fulfilled important administrative functions in the thirteenth century as early commandery centres, whilst Marienwerder would become the headquarters of the Pomesanian bishops. The great castle of Marienburg began to be constructed from at least the 1280s, but very little is

known about its early form and it would not become a significant centre until the consolidation of the *Ordensstaat* in the fourteenth century.

Marienwerder (Kwidzyn)

Peter of Dusburg described the building of the first Teutonic fortification on a fenland isle named Sankt-Marienwerder in 1233 (and also Christburg in 1283) as consisting of prepared materials enabling rapid construction, a process that has been compared to William the Conqueror's shipment of building materials from Normandy to England in 1066 (Arszyński, 2005, p. 127). The early fortification was shortly relocated to the top of the nearby escarpment and became the subsequent base for crusading armies to attack Pomesania. The early fortification was allegedly rebuilt at the site of the Prussian stronghold named in Latin Quedin and became an administrative centre for the Order (Haftka, 1999, p. 143). A settlement developed next to the timber and earth castle, although this was destroyed during the first Prussian insurrection (1243), and subsequently the castle was replaced with a brick and stone structure which was able to withstand two further documented sieges. Excavations by Waldemar Heym at Starozamkowa Street in 1928 supposedly revealed traces of the earlier Prussian stronghold; timber and earth fortifications were uncovered but were not linked to any particular group. However, this could not be verified in later excavations in 1987. The castle had been destroyed and dismantled in the sixteenth century, and very little is known of its thirteenth-century phases. In the outer bailey, the remains of a timber and walled structure dating to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were uncovered, encompassing the earliest phase of the Teutonic Order's fortification (Pawłowski, 2004). The excavations revealed the re-use of existing indigenous timber constructions, and may relate to the rebuilding of the settlement after its documented destruction by the Prussians in 1242. Whilst the early settlement remains largely unknown, in 1250 the castle and settlement were acquired by the Pomesanian Bishop Ernest of Forgau and subsequently developed as an episcopal centre. No trace of the early timber church has been found, although it may lie underneath the later cathedral which became integrated with the new castle of the Pomesanian Chapter in the early-fourteenth century (Haftka, 1999, p. 145; see also chapter 6). Not far from Marienwerder, the Order constructed a fortified watch tower in 1234 at Podzamcze. This consisted of a motte, separated by a moat at its front with a three-storey timber tower built on stone foundations. The fortification, which is not mentioned in written sources, appears to have been occupied until the first Prussian insurrection. Marienwerder was described as being situated within marshy fenlands, overlooking the floodplain of the Vistula. No detailed environmental archaeology has been carried out in the vicinity of Kwidzyn, although it is clear the land began to be drained with the construction of embankments, after which it was possible to construct roads connecting with the castle at Mewe in the fourteenth century (Powierski, 2001, p. 165).

Christburg (Dzierzgoń)

The Teutonic Order's castle at Christburg would become an important commandery centre and the setting for the signing of the treaty marking the end of the first Prussian insurrection in February 1249. Archaeological investigations, primarily in the 1930s and late 1990s, have shed some light on the documented sequence of events associated with the site and its hinterland in the thirteenth century. At Alt Christburg, a few kilometres south of the later commandery centre, the Pomesanian stronghold situated on the highest point in the landscape was acquired by the Order, most likely during the winter campaign of 1234; the following year crusades were being launched from here. The stronghold was defended by high embankments except on its western side where the River Dzierzgoń formed a natural barrier. Excavations in the 1930s and in the last decade, as well as earlier field walking, revealed the site was occupied by Prussians from the ninth century, although settlement in the vicinity is evident from at least the seventh century. The stronghold, serving as a refuge, may have been defended by a palisade until the construction of embankments in the 1230s, the largest of which protected the eastern side of the complex and was reinforced with a moat. The Order strengthened the fortifications of the stronghold by raising the height of the embankment and deepening the moat, followed by the construction of a fortified timber gatehouse on the site of the former entrance and a six-sided tower. An outer line of embankments may have been left unfinished, perhaps as a result of the Prussian Insurrection (Szczeptański, 2008). When (new) Christburg was established as the headquarters of the commandery in 1248, as well as the residence of the Great Hospitaller and an important point on the road linking Marienwerder with Elbing, the earlier site lost its significance. However, it continued to be occupied for a short period as suggested by a pottery kiln, ceramic fragments and the remains of a tower constructed from small field stones cemented with clay. By the early-fourteenth century, it was a point of orientation for local settlement boundaries and a memory of the crusading period. The castle and town of Christburg itself is relatively poorly known from an archaeological perspective (see Haftka, 1999, pp. 75–80), although excavations from 1998–2001 led by Antoni Pawłowski revealed various elements of the brick and stone castle rebuilt in the 14th century, along with an abundance of material culture (Pawłowski, 2003). The reconstructed plan of the castle suggested it was irregular in shape, rather than conforming to the standardised conventual form (Pawłowski, 2007).

Mewe (Gniew)

In the second half of the eleventh century, a settlement was established in the area that would become medieval Mewe, which continued to be occupied until the town was established. The area around Gniew saw the rise and abandonment of three strongholds; the latest at Dymbowie (between Cieple and Gniew)

was burned at the start of the thirteenth century. Along with the rich material discovered at Cieple attesting long-distance trade, it is clear this was a major centre of communications along the Pomeranian–Prussian frontier (Powierski, 2001, p. 166). From 1229–1233, the settlement and the surrounding territory (*terram Gymeii*) was the property of the Cistercian abbey at Oliwa but, following tensions between the Pomeranian Duke Sambor and the monastery, the territory was bequeathed to the Teutonic Order in 1276 with the grant confirmed six years later (Bruski, 1998). Excavations at the stronghold at Cieple uncovered the remains of a timber and earth embankment with a burned layer, dating to the first half of the thirteenth century. In the north-west, traces of a moat were visible. The site represented the first Teutonic Order castle in this area, made from prepared materials most probably recycled from the disassembled castle of Potterberg, as described by Peter of Dusburg (Kochański, 2001, p. 466). Since it was not possible to flood the moat, the defence of the site had to be organised differently (*ibid.*, p. 468). From 1283, the Order began to construct the castle overlooking the settlement of Gniew and, with the influx of German colonists employed in the building works, the ethnic character of the Pomeranian complex began to change. In 1297, the town was organised under the Kulm Law and its medieval plan has remained more or less unchanged. Excavations at the Wzgórze Staromiejskie from 1975–1976 revealed multiple phases of occupation from the second half of the eleventh century through to the fifteenth century. The late-thirteenth-century phase associated with the Teutonic Order's presence revealed that the area around the market square had been levelled, a process of preparing the terrain for new buildings that would happen again in the first half of the fourteenth century (Choińska-Bochdan, 1990). In the outer bailey of the later castle of Gniew, there is evidence for the strengthening of the foreshore as indicated by the discovery of three slanting posts with fascines. Mewe would become an important base for launching attacks into Pomerania in the early-fourteenth century, but it also provided the Teutonic Order with another point of access on the lower Vistula.

Zantir and Biała Góra

The case of Zantir (or Santyr) encapsulates some of the complexity associated with tracing the early activities of the Teutonic Order in Prussia. The written sources state Bishop Christian established his settlement, mission and cathedral here, and that it was located in the contested borderlands affected by Prussian incursions in the early-thirteenth century. In the early years of the crusades, the Teutonic Order took possession of this site whereupon it became the main administrative centre for the region of Pomesania, and perhaps even Warmia. In the early 1240s, Zantir was procured by the Pomeranian duke during his war with the Order, and subsequently returned to their possession in 1248–1249. The convent features in documentation from the 1250s, and is last mentioned in 1280. Peter of Dusburg (*Chronicle*, III: 208) would later

write that in this year the convent was trans-located to Marienburg; whether this simply refers to the movement of administrative functions or to the actual recycling of building materials is unclear (Pollakówna, 1997). In summary, Zantir represents a short-lived but extremely important commandery centre for the thirteenth-century crusading period. The settlement continued to function; it is mentioned a few times in fourteenth-century documents and it was re-fortified by the Order during the Thirteen Years War.

The specific location of Zantir has been a perennial puzzle for historians and archaeologists (Powierski, 1968) and, since the mid-1940s, the most likely site has been attributed to a place on the banks of the old River Nogat (subsequently diverted westwards in the early modern period), just north of Biała Góra (formerly the village of Weissenburg), 10km south of the castle at Marienburg (Czaplewski, 1946). Excavations to the north of the village in 2007, 2008 and 2011 revealed a cultural layer punctuated with multiple pits containing a significant quantity of ceramics, metalwork, animal bone, caches of gothic brick and Teutonic Order bracteates (Figure 3.7). In 2011, wall bricks and roof tiles were recovered in the north-western corner of the site, piled up in an orderly fashion. Some artefacts, including ship rivets and a bone comb, could be dated to the thirteenth century, and this has been tentatively linked to the occupation of the site by Pomeranians and German colonists under the administration of the Teutonic Order (Sawicki, pers. comm.). The site appears to have been used intensively and then largely abandoned, although activity continued into the fifteenth century and the area was later used as a rubbish dump. The site is



FIGURE 3.7 The oldest known Teutonic Order coins of the so-called ‘Arm and Banner type’ and dated to 1236/1237–c.1247/1248 (a). Eagles and crosses dominated coin decoration from the late-fourteenth century. The ‘Third Greek Cross type’ (b), from a hoard in Podwiesiek, was dated to 1416–1460, whilst this example of the ‘Second Eagle type’ (c), dated to 1460–1467, was found within a hoard during excavations at Puck (Putzig) castle (aff. Paszkiewicz, 2007, pp. 172, fig. 1; p. 181, figs. 18–19)

situated on a spur overlooking the course of the old River Nogat, representing a suitably defensive position, typical of the site chosen by the Order during its northwards drive through western Prussia. With the excavation programme encompassing geophysical techniques alongside environmental archaeological applications, it is likely this site will provide much information in years to come about the establishment and development of a colonising site during the crusading period.

Marienburg began to be built from the 1270s (Powierski, 1979; Józwiak & Trupinda, 2007); however, very little is known of its early phase aside from a limited number of architectural elements in the high castle. Cores taken from the courtyard have revealed at least two potential phases of levelling with sand but, in the absence of suitable material, no radiocarbon dates have been obtained. As a result, the question as to whether the castle was built on the location of an earlier stronghold remains open. Scattered finds of early-medieval ceramics in the vicinity of the castle may suggest the presence of a pre-Crusade community, and future excavations may shed light on this crucial early phase when the Order secured the River Nogat in the final years of the Prussian Crusade. The development of the Marienburg castle complex is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

Elbing (Elbląg)

The timber fortress at Elbing was most likely constructed by the winter of 1237 in the place later referred to as *Herrenpfeil*, surrounded by the River Elbing, although it has not been archaeologically identified (Długokęcki, 1992, pp. 137, 167). The following year, the nearby settlement defined as a *civitas* sees the construction of a Dominican friary (Domagała, 2004, p. 89). There has been some debate as to whether there was any continuity between the thirteenth-century planned town and the early-medieval emporium at Truso (see also chapter 2), but there is no evidence for twelfth-century occupation at either site (Jagodziński, 2004a). In 1239/1240, the Teutonic Order started to build the castle from stone and brick in place of the earlier timber fortress. There were also plans to build an impressive church, fitting for the planned residence of the Master. The church was built in the Romanesque style on stone columns, and dedicated to St Andrew. In 1232, the Holy Roman Emperor had presented Hermann of Salza with a relic of the true cross, which was then subsequently deposited at the Order's church (Józefczyk, 1995, p. 36). The following year, Pope Gregory granted a ten days' indulgence to crusaders who honoured the relic of the Holy Cross held in the Order's fortress at Elbing, echoing the importance of the True Cross in the religious and military life of the Kingdom of Jerusalem (Fonnesberg-Schmidt, 2007, pp. 195–6). Excavations of the castle in 1914 and 1919 uncovered various architectural fragments, including part of a portal decoration showing the foolish and wise virgins. This may have inspired the portal in Marienburg, and is likely to have

been earlier. Elbing functioned as the main base for launching crusades into Warmia, and also as the political centre of the Teutonic Order in Prussia from 1251–1309 (Jóźwiak, 2001a, p. 417), but its mercantile community also developed its own civic identity within a few decades.

The town acquired the Lübeck Law, probably in 1240 (this was grudgingly confirmed by the Order in 1246), with its rights listed in 82 articles; this number had virtually doubled by 1275 and, by 1295, there were 256 articles listed in the town's codex (Domagała, 2004, p. 92). Archaeologically, the early phase of the town is well known from the mid-thirteenth century. A central area developed around St Nicholas' Church, where stalls were located in the mid-thirteenth century and a significant quantity of leather shoe fragments and off-cuts have been recovered, possibly represented a site of production. The majority of early town houses were timber-framed with clay or brick walls, although stone foundations of four residential towers were also discovered during excavations in Kowalska 12, Rybacka 34, Sw. Ducja 4 and Bednarska 22. These dated to the 1260s and 1280s and, complementing the appearance of imported luxuries, such as wine jugs from Saintogne in France in 1270, they represented the wealthiest inhabitants of the early town and reflect the rapid development of social stratification (Nawrońska, 2008, p. 512). This also reflects how quickly Elbing developed into a trading centre. The town seal from 1242 – the oldest known Hanseatic seal – depicts a seagoing ship and most trade connections were linked to the Baltic, although the town was also situated on the overland route from Lübeck through to Königsberg. By 1293, Elbing was trading with England (Nawrońska, 1999, p. 373). The town's hinterland also rapidly developed along with the provisioning of plant and animal products (see also chapter 7). The early, largely timber town would be destroyed by fire in 1288, only to be rebuilt with a slightly different layout (see also chapter 5).

The process of colonising Pomesania began with the commandery centres of the Teutonic Order but, by the late-thirteenth century, other prospectors were being encouraged to invest in the newly conquered territories. One example is situated in the vicinity of Prabuty, near the village of Stażki, where excavations in the nineteenth century and later by Antoni Pawłowski in the 1980s focused on the stronghold of 'Góra Zamkowa'. This site has been associated with the Knight Dietrich of Stange who acquired it from the Pomesanian Chapter in 1285, and constructed his residence within the remnants of the earlier Prussian stronghold. The site was situated on a headland protected by a moat and accessed via a wooden bridge leading to a timber gatehouse in the form of a tower. Within was a residential building with its lower levels constructed from stone, as well as structures identified as stables, sunken featured buildings, a well and a cellar dating to the fourteenth century. The stronghold was eventually destroyed in the seventeenth century. Alongside participation in the Order's military campaigns, the activities of knights such as Dietrich contributed towards the security and stability of the Teutonic Order's developing state.

Eastern Prussia: conquering the forests and lakelands

After the conquest of Pomesania and Pogesania, and the establishment of the first timber-built town at Elbing, crusading armies launched their attacks against Warmia. The cessation of hostilities with Duke Sventopelk of Pomerania in 1248, and the agreement of a new border running down the centre of the Vistula, enabled the Teutonic Order to focus their attention on eastern Prussia (Dygo, 2008b, pp. 71–72). Pollen studies, as well as the *Chronicle* of Peter of Dusburg, indicate the tribal regions of eastern Prussia, with the possible exception of the Sambian Peninsula, were covered in large tracts of woodland, interspersed with marshes, bogs and lakes, and virtual ‘islands’ of settlement and human activity (see also chapter 7). The progress of the crusades, from Warmia through to Sambia, was relatively swift in this region and a number of major bases were established by the Order. However, the development of stable political organisation and the process of colonisation were very protracted. There are very few thirteenth-century sites associated with the presence of the Order in eastern Prussia. Instead, the archaeology of this region attests to the widespread abandonment and occasional continuation of tribal sites, and the establishment of the earliest commandery centre at Königsberg.

The end of tribal Warmia and Natangia

Warmia (German Ermland) was relatively densely settled in the thirteenth century (see also chapter 2). The most important political centre situated within the area of Warmian settlement, but within the defined territory of Natangia, was at Balga. The Order occupied the earlier Prussian stronghold and constructed their own fortification in 1239, which came under regular attack from various tribal armies (*ibid.*, p. 67). Warmia itself saw the abandonment of many strongholds and the construction of fortifications in Braunsberg (Braniewo) and Heilsberg (Lidzbark Warmiński). The latter, which would develop into an impressive brick castle from the mid-fourteenth century, was initially a timber and earth structure constructed by the Order and handed over to the Ermland bishop in 1251. Virtually nothing is known about its thirteenth-century form. In Braniewo, the Prussian stronghold overlooking the River Pasłęka had been destroyed in 1240 and its site was subsequently occupied by the Order. This has not been verified archaeologically but, three years later, the castle was acquired by the first Bishop of Ermland along with a significant part of Warmian territory. After recovering from the havoc of a Prussian incursion in 1261, the earlier settlement was relocated along with the castle which began to be built as a quadrangular brick structure from the 1270s (Hafika, 1999, pp. 48–49; see also chapter 6).

In Barta, the castle at Reszel (Röbel) was built on the site of an early-medieval settlement, fortified by an embankment which was excavated. The Order built a guard tower at Równina Górna on the River Guber. In Natangia,

excavations at the large stronghold in Dubrowka (b. Pilzen) revealed it had been destroyed and rebuilt several times, with several layers of stones and burnt timber, as well as reinforced structures. This has been identified with the stronghold used by Henry Monte, which was conquered in 1271 by Deitrich of Meißen. Nearby, the trade centre at Gerkin associated by German archaeologists and historians with the vicinity of the village of Görken, was also destroyed at the end of the Great Prussian Uprising (Hoffman, 1999, p. 8). The remains of the castle at Slavskoye (Kreuzburg) are thought to have been built on an earlier Natangian stronghold, but this has not been verified archaeologically. It is clear that the thirteenth-century structures of Warmia, Natangia and Barta are poorly known from an archaeological perspective.

Sambia and the East Prussian commanderies

The conquest of Sambia by the Teutonic Order was envisaged by Jerzy Antoniewicz (1955, p. 249) as a calculated attack on successful Sambian trade centres in order to fragment the political structure of the indigenous wealthy elite, who were competing with mercantile towns such as Lübeck. Sambia certainly represented an important centre of regional power in Prussia and for crusading armies it was the gateway to southern Curonia, Samogitia and Lithuania. Between 1242 and 1255, the Order's armies approached the peninsula from the south-west through the Vistula Lagoon and proceeded eastwards, establishing an important base at the trading complex of Tuwangste situated on the mouth of the River Pregel. This probably resulted in the destruction of the Prussian settlement and stronghold; in 1890, works in the north-west area of the Order's later castle uncovered a pre-Crusade layer which was 1.2m in thickness and packed with charcoal (Kulakov, 1999, p. 160). The form of the early castle – documented several years later as Königsberg – is unknown and, in 1257, a quantity of locally gathered stone was brought to the fortification to build the walls of what may have been a single rectangular building. This was later extended and situated within a quadrangular precinct (Lahrs, 1930, p. 24). The following year a settlement was established north of the castle and, by 1286, the Old Town had been established to the south. In between Balga and Königsberg, the castle at Brandenburg (Ushakovo) was built in 1266, supposedly on the site of a Prussian stronghold (although this has not been confirmed archaeologically). The site was named after Otto, the Margrave of Brandenburg, who was obliged to fund the building of the convent in more durable material. The construction of the brick castle can be dated by fragments of vaulting from the church to c.1280. Excavations in 1887 uncovered wall foundations and cellars, and loose architectural fragments were brought back to Marienburg by Conrad Steinbrecht (Pospieszny, 2010b).

According to Peter of Dusburg, the Sambian uprising ended in 1277 at the battle of Pubetin (Pobethen). Whilst the regional elite were subdued, much of the Sambian population survived; at the start of the fifteenth century, Prussians

accounted for around two-thirds of the population in this region (Powierski, 2003, p. 153). A document of 1430 refers to the presence of nine Prussians in the vicinity of Pobethen, and the family name of one of these – Suppliethen (Sapolyten; Supplieth) – would remain popular into the early-twentieth century (Hoffman, 1999, p. 10). Moreover, the continuation of pre-Christian rites is evident in Sambian cemeteries such as Alt Wehlau, located in the south-east (see also chapter 7). Despite this, the transitional phase of early- to late-medieval Sambia remains poorly understood from an archaeological perspective. Earlier excavations have suggested that some strongholds can be dated to the Teutonic Order's occupation; in some cases there is some evidence of overlapping chronology (Wendt, 2011). These have yet to be investigated with more thorough, systematic excavation, although the ongoing collaboration between Russian and German archaeologists promises to shed vital light on this issue in the future.

To the north-east, in Scalovia and Nadruvia, there is evidence for depopulation during the thirteenth century. From the early-twentieth century, it was speculated that the belt of wilderness stretched down to eastern Sambia, although the survival of Balt place names suggests this region was not completely depopulated and would subsequently see both German and Lithuanian colonisation. The north-eastern extent of the Teutonic Order's territory stretched to the River Nemunas, which remained a volatile zone throughout the fourteenth century. The Order sought to secure this border with a series of strongholds, the most important of which was Ragnit (Neman) replacing the earlier Scalovian centre (Powierski, 2003, p. 157). The preliminary fortification was replaced by a larger brick and stone castle towards the end of the fourteenth century. Memel (Klaipėda), founded in 1252, would become the base for attacks into Samogitia and future archaeological investigations will shed more light on the early phase of this colonising frontier settlement and its hinterland. On the Lithuanian side of the Nemunas, there are remnants of hillforts, some of which were destroyed in the thirteenth century (Figure 3.8). The site of Rambynas, documented as being conquered by the Order in 1276, was badly eroded during the nineteenth century; the thirteenth-century hillfort at Jurbarkas with 17–20m-high slopes was documented as being destroyed in 1291. The hillfort at Šereiklaukis (site 1) has been dated to the thirteenth century and further east Raudonėnai, as well as Pašiliai on the Dubysa, were occupied until the mid-thirteenth century. To the south, the stronghold at Pavėisininkai on the bank of Lake Veisiejis was abandoned in the thirteenth century; the same is true of the hillforts in the Klaipėda region such as Akmeniškiai, Šiūpariai, Žakainiai and Žvaginiai, and within the vicinity of the Order's commandery centre at Memel the multi-period Curonian strongholds at Laistai and Eketė were occupied into the mid-thirteenth century. Archaeologically, their final phases are relatively poorly known but, taken as a group, the collapse of these local political centres is testimony to the impact of the Order's crusades against western Lithuania at the end of the thirteenth century (Zabiela, 1995).



(a)



(b)



(c)

FIGURE 3.8 Monuments of the medieval Prussian–Lithuanian frontier. The hillfort at Jurbarkas (Bišpilis), western Lithuania (a), destroyed at the end of the thirteenth century; the remains of the Teutonic Order’s fourteenth-century *castrum* at Kalnėnai (Bišpiliukai, identified as Georgenburg) just south of Jurbarkas (b); and further east the hillfort at Seredžius (site 1; identified as Pieštėvės), which remained an active border stronghold on the Nemunas throughout the fourteenth century (c) (G. Zabiela)

Central Prussia: from Lubavia to Galindia

Lubavia, situated in-between the Kulmerland and Sasna, was part of the Slavic–Prussian borderland in the twelfth century. To the north, Prussian settlements were concentrated above the Lubavian upland but, in the first half of the thirteenth century, the area around Lubawa and Nowe Miasto was occupied by the Sasnians and raiding continued into the 1260s. Lubavia and Sasna had been targeted by missionary activity in the years before the crusades (see also chapter 2) and Polish military reprisals continued into the 1220s. Once pacified, the territory would be split between the Kulmerland bishops and the Teutonic Order. From an archaeological perspective some strongholds related to the Masovian period of expansion cease to function before or during the thirteenth century, but a few have been dated to the crusading or post-crusading period. Dendrochronological dating suggests the stronghold at Nowy Dwór functioned until at least 1252 and the stronghold at Trzcina has material from both the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the late-medieval period (Grażawski, 2009). Peter of Dusburg does not mention any battles with the Sasnians, perhaps implying these were sparsely populated areas with limited significance to the Order in the thirteenth century. The region began to see re-colonisation from the start of the fourteenth century; the stronghold at Lidzbark Welski was occupied from the end of the thirteenth century/start of the fourteenth century, perhaps by colonists ahead of the Teutonic Order's foundation of the town (*ibid.*, p. 195).

A similar situation appears to have existed in neighbouring Galindia, where there is tentative evidence for the survival of Prussian communities and the continuation of pre-Christian practices. One of the best-known examples is the settlement complex in Równina Dolna and Równina Górna (Figure 3.9). This consisted of a cemetery and stronghold in use in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the Prussian population, as well as by the Teutonic Order. Inhumation was practised, although the extent to which this was forced by the Order is unclear, and people continued to be buried with elaborate sets of grave goods. The transitional nature of the site is suggested by the presence of lead crosses, amulets with bear teeth set in bronze fittings and necklaces incorporating the Order's coins with the inscription 'Ave Maria' (Odoj, 1956). The Święta Góra/Staświny site has already been mentioned but represents a rare example of some form of continuity or transitional community at an earlier tribal centre. On the Bartian–Galindian border, excavations at the stronghold at Bezlawki indicated the site was abandoned in the Early Medieval Period only to be reoccupied from c.1360, most likely as part of the complex associated with the Order's brick castle of Bäslack, situated 600m to the north-west (Nowakiewicz & Rzeszotarska–Nowakiewicz, 2001, p. 140; Nowakiewicz & Rudnicki, 2002). Compared to the Kulmerland and Sambia, crusading-era sites in Central Prussia are limited and the process of colonisation does not really begin here until the fourteenth century.



FIGURE 3.9 Artefacts recovered from Prussian graves in Równina Dolna (thirteenth to fourteenth century), including brooches, bells and bear claws pendants, Warmian-Masurian voivodeship (aft. Odoj, 1958, plates 15, 24)

Sudovia

Within the eastern borderland of the conquered territories, Sudovia contains virtually no sites associated with the Teutonic Order's presence in the thirteenth century, military or otherwise. The great tribal stronghold at Jegliniec, not far from the modern Polish–Lithuanian border, may well have been destroyed by a Ruthenian army at some point in the twelfth century on the basis of recovered arrowheads, although the excavated area remains comparatively small (see also chapter 2). There has been some discussion as to whether the crusades against the Prussian tribes even included the Sudovians, with suggestions on the basis

of sites such as Jegliniec that this group was broken up earlier by neighbouring Slavs, i.e. Masovians and Rus' (Bojtár, 1999, p. 154). The last Sudovian leader, Skurda, is documented as fleeing to Lithuania with his followers in 1283, whilst larger groups were deported by the Order to north-western Sambia (*Sudaischer Winkel*). The invisibility of settlement could be a product of the limited accessibility to archaeological data; part of Sudovia lies in the densely wooded region of the Augustów Forest, which has prevented detailed archaeological investigations. Settlement appears to be small scale and dispersed, and the few ceramic fragments that have been recovered have yet to be properly typologised and dated (Ejdulis, 2006). The pollen studies that have been done here indicate very little human activity until the post-medieval period, supporting the notion of a depopulated wilderness (see also chapter 7). To the south, the definition of the frontier with Masovia in both the Early and Late Medieval Period remains unclear; the first written account is from 1325 indicating that ducal dominion extended to the Biebrza springs. Unfortunately, the archaeology of the region is poorly disseminated, and so our understanding of settlement in the thirteenth century remains limited (Kowalczyk-Heyman, 2006a).

Most of the strongholds in Sudovia were abandoned during or before the thirteenth century; only a small number may have been adopted by the Order for use as fortifications or sentry towers (Łapo, 1998, p. 204). Jerzy Wisniewski (1961) had argued that Sudovian place names for former settlements were passed down by ducal foresters, whilst names of rivers and lakes were preserved in Lithuanian, Slavic and German documents, rather than by indigenous survivors. However, even in this central part of the 'Great Wilderness', ceramics recovered from sites in Posejnele and Półkoty (Sejny district, Podlaskie voivodeship) hint at the survival of sporadic Sudovian communities into the Late Medieval Period (Engel *et al.*, 2006, p. 202). Future archaeological research is unlikely to change this general impression of the collapse of eastern Prussian society. However, it may shed more light on how surviving settlements were able to endure in such apparent and dangerous isolation in the depths of the 'Great Wilderness'. Although Prussia had been subdued by the last decade of the thirteenth century, the Teutonic Order's ongoing war with Lithuania saw military engagements on the Sudovian–Masovian border. The marriage of the Masovian Duke Bolesław II to the daughter of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Treniota resulted in the strategically located frontier stronghold of Wizna being used as a base for Lithuanian raids into the Order's territory. In 1294, the Order's army attacked and destroyed the stronghold, which was almost immediately rebuilt; from an archaeological perspective the last occupation phase at the site is dated to the thirteenth century. The political situation was reversed by the early years of the fourteenth century and the Lithuanians began to raid Masovia (Kamiński, 1961).

The last decade of the thirteenth century saw enough stability within the Order's conquered territories for key urban centres to develop, reflected in the appearance of specialist workshops producing commodities such as glass and

brick, alongside the participation of the Order's primary urban colonies within international trade (see also chapter 5). The defining point in the consolidation of the Order's state was the annexation of Gdańsk and its neighbouring territories in 1309, which also coincided with the relocation of the headquarters of the Teutonic Knights to Marienburg.

Conclusion: the character of conquest and colonisation in thirteenth-century Prussia

The primary source of the Teutonic Order's military conquest of Prussia is Peter of Dusburg's *Chronicle*, but the archaeology of the thirteenth century in this region remains problematic. The events of the crusades took place over five decades with numerous examples of fortifications and settlements being destroyed and rebuilt, with battles, raids, sieges and massacres on both sides. There has been a regular tendency to synchronise the archaeology with this documented account. In this respect, the archaeology of thirteenth-century Prussia has, until relatively recently, retained a cultural–historical approach to material culture. As demonstrated by the examples above, the level of resolution in the archaeological record is extremely variable. The conservative character of indigenous Prussian material culture, which clearly continues to be used into the thirteenth century, only enables low-resolution relative chronologies to be constructed. In many cases, thirteenth-century contexts have been significantly truncated or obliterated by subsequent phases of rebuilding of castles and towns. In other instances, date ranges for contexts encompass both the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. There are no reported battlefield assemblages from this period, and only sporadic skeletal fragments and cross-bow bolts have been found on some stronghold sites, which may or may not be connected with their destruction. Interesting exceptions include examples from Livonia, such as the case of Viljandi (Fellin; south-central Estonia) where the incremental progress of the Sword Brothers' siege against the Estonian stronghold has left significant archaeological traces (Haak, 2003; Lang & Valk, 2011) (Figure 3.10). What is clear is that occupation at the majority of strongholds – with few exceptions – ends before or in the thirteenth century; some may have had fallen to earlier Slavic military ventures. But irrespective of the impact of these early incursions of which our knowledge is extremely limited, the Teutonic Order had completely reconfigured the political landscape by the end of the thirteenth century.

With the appearance of documentary sources charting the foundations and re-foundations of settlements alongside a detailed dendrochronology of timber structures from the earliest phases of the Order's towns, it is possible to scrutinise the first wave of colonisation at a much higher resolution than the final phase of Prussian settlement. What is immediately striking is the speed at which the major towns developed in the middle decades of the thirteenth century (for detailed case studies see also chapter 5), despite the instability of the crusading period,



FIGURE 3.10 The conserved ruins of the high castle in Viljandi (Fellin), Estonia

and they attest to constant investments in security, resources as well as access to provisioning and commercial networks which enabled them to function effectively. Indeed, the early development of these towns can most probably be linked to the crusading process itself; i.e. the requirements of building and maintaining the Order's early castles, of provisioning crusading armies which passed through these centres and ultimately developing internal and external trade with the growth of the urban population. The wealth of urban communities that is expressed in the construction of churches and walls from the latter decades of the thirteenth century was invariably generated through the war economy operating in Prussia at this time. Involvement in the Hanseatic League can, on one level, also be linked to this for the military campaigns and provisioning requirements of crusading armies, not only the Teutonic Order, stimulated commerce across the thirteenth-century Baltic region in much the same way as the Italian maritime republics prospered with the establishment of a permanent theatre of war in the Holy Land from the end of the eleventh century.

Before the 1280s there is no evidence of a systematic building programme associated with the Order, which focused its efforts on a series of strategic fortifications; indeed the Knights do not appear to have sponsored or directed the development of towns or the construction of churches and monasteries (Mroczko, 1974, p. 298). The irregular shape of the early castles is a defining feature of the Order's structures in the middle decades of the thirteenth century, constructed in strategic places with the aim of providing secure military bases. The regular, quadrangular plan would develop from these only later (see also

chapter 4). Unfortunately, these early castles remain largely unknown or at best only known in fragments, and so it is difficult to compare their spatial arrangement with the better-known fourteenth-century structures. The Order's castles for much of the thirteenth century provided a means of securing the military conquest of Prussia, after which they took on more diverse roles. This varied across the Order's state and from castle to castle. In the Kulmerland, the castles and economy of the Teutonic Order reflected the unstable political and military situation until 1275 (Poliński, 2005). The development of a settlement policy, including the construction of suitable defensive structures, as well as economic change in the later decades of the thirteenth century, enabled more investment.

Changes from timber to more durable materials in Prussia mirrored a similar situation in Hungary after 1242, when an intensive programme of building castles from stone can be seen as a response to the catastrophic impact of the Mongol invasion (Laszlovszky & Soós, 2001, p. 328). What is interesting is that the Teutonic Order constructed stone castles in Transylvania which, at the time, were effectively a royal monopoly in Hungary, whilst in Prussia the earliest fortifications were built from timber and earth, with stone and brick only gradually being introduced from the mid-thirteenth century. The lack of suitable stone and the role of the monastic orders in sponsoring brick buildings also contributed to this regionally specific trend. Changes in castle function reflected the development of a stable core in the Teutonic Order's state and increasing organisational complexity. The Teutonic Order's administration evolved quickly after 1230, with the first commander documented in Elbing in 1246 and then in the Kulmerland. The system was developed by the acting Master Eberhard of Sayn, who made Elbing the head convent and provincial capital, with Balga and Christburg as the most important seats of commanders in Prussia. New administrative districts were created with the expansion of the Order's territories (Jóźwiak, 2001a). By the end of the thirteenth century, the offices of voigt (or *Fokt* or 'advocate') and procurators are evident; the former arose to meet the legal challenges of running the new state and the procurator was introduced to support commanders with the organisation of smaller territorial units. These administrative structures crystallised in 1309 and are directly reflected in the design and development of the Teutonic Order's castles (see also chapter 4). Investment within the lower Vistula and Baltic coastal zone would not develop until the fourteenth century, and the small number of castles in the easternmost regions of Prussia reflected the unstable nature of the frontier with Lithuania (Arszyński, 1995). In Memel, this peripheral situation would continue to affect the development of the castle and town into the fifteenth century.

Colonisation, ethnicity and Ostsiedlung

Historical understandings and discussions of *Ostsiedlung* have, until quite recently, been coloured by nationalist agendas. Archaeologists have also been

aware of the problems of associating early-medieval material culture with ethnicity (Curta, 2007). However, archaeologists working on southern Baltic sites from western Pomerania through to Sambia have not shied away from defining Slavic, Prussian and German groups through their material culture. The early-medieval Slavic–Prussian frontier is very much defined by the distinction between Slavic and Prussian sites, identified by contrasting ceramic traditions and forming distinct cultural zones (see also chapter 2). The spirit of the 2004 *Terra Pacifica* exhibition and its supporting research promoted a view of multi-cultural interaction between Slavs, Prussians and Scandinavians, whilst demonstrating regional segregation in the settlement pattern of the Vistula fenlands. This was contrasted with the ‘interactions’ associated with the Teutonic Order’s crusades (Trupinda, 2004a). To the west, distinctions are evident in material culture between the Rhine and Elbe, and between the Elbe and Vistula (Wünsch, 2008, p. 32). In the light of recent decades of scholarship on the medieval Christian ideology of holy war, it is possible – and desirable – to replace ahistorical understandings of *Ostsiedlung* as an ethnic agenda of colonisation with a process of religious conversion aligned with local political and commercial expansion. With the development of regional models of early-medieval colonisation across the southern Baltic, central and eastern Europe, it is increasingly possible for inter-regional projects to compare and contrast cultural encounters between German, Slavic and Baltic groups. This approach was adopted by the Culture Clash or Compromise (CCC) project, which produced a series of publications with a multi-disciplinary approach situating these encounters within a broader European context.

The archaeology of thirteenth-century Prussia reinforces our understanding of the Crusade as resulting in a cultural event horizon and enables us to scrutinise the Teutonic Order’s decision-making processes in developing fortifications and settlements from another angle. The process of Christianisation is poorly represented in the archaeology of the thirteenth century, although the crusading ideology of the Teutonic Order is perhaps best represented on its early coinage and the development of the conventual castle – effectively a fortified monastery (see also chapter 4). It is this ideology and the role of the central European crusading movement that provides an essential context to the process of colonisation. The military conquest of Prussia was a continuation of earlier holy wars which had eventually become sanctioned by the papacy as legitimate crusades, as penitential wars. In 1217, participants in Bishop Christian’s expeditions received crusading indulgences (Starnawska, 2001, p. 419), and the relic of the True Cross was carried into battle against the pagan Prussians, paralleling its deployment in the Holy Land. It may even have inspired the adoption of the cross as the institutional emblem of the Order in the Baltic (Paszkievicz, 2009, p. 70). The early organisation of the Christian state in Prussia was directly linked to the crusading infrastructure and the security of the occupied region was maintained exclusively by the Teutonic Order. This is not a way of replacing discourse on ethnicity with religiosity, but a

means of continuing to rehabilitate the idea of *Ostsiedlung* within our understanding of medieval European society. Ethnicity remains a central topic for the archaeological identification of old, abandoned centres and the establishment of new colonies. Our understanding of this process can also be detached from unhelpful comparisons with modern colonialism (Ekdahl, 2004, p. 10) which have prompted interpretations of medieval Prussian art and architecture as *Kolonialkunst* (see also chapter 1). Whilst this definition of the Baltic crusader states has been the subject of lively debate (Biskup, 2002a, p. 133; Blomkvist, 2005), the term is generally avoided in the archaeological literature where cultural trends in both the Early (i.e. Slavic) and Late Medieval Periods are framed in the context of ‘colonisation’.

Instead, archaeologists across the eastern Baltic often describe the cultural changes in ethnic terms – German or Germanic, Slavic, Prussian or Baltic – although today this is disconnected from earlier notions of ethnic agendas driving the replacement of one culture with another. Yet the ethnic nuances of medieval Prussia continue to elude archaeologists, particularly with regard to the surviving indigenous population. The Prussian Crusade is often thought of as a war of annihilation and, whilst the deliberate destruction of settlements, people – men, women and children – and the translocation of communities punctuates Peter of Dusburg’s narrative, there were also those who converted and benefited from their shift in allegiance. The son of the executed Prussian leader Pepin became a trusted and important figure in Christian Prussia and, during the tribal insurrections, the Prussian nobility who had pledged their allegiance to the Order were the first to be targeted (Urban, 2000, p. 117). By the end of the thirteenth century, the surviving Prussian aristocracy which had not participated in the uprisings had been incorporated into the Order’s state structure. Furthermore, a significant part of the Prussian population survived as suggested by, amongst other things, the documented settlements organised under ‘Prussian Law’, not to mention the persistence of pre-Christian practices. Comparatively few colonists settled in Sambia where Prussian identity survived the longest (*ibid.*, p. 364). The gradual disappearance of the language along with a pre-Christian Baltic identity was not due to extermination but over two centuries of assimilation or ‘Germanisation’ (Ekdahl, 2004, p. 7) and, in the eastern borderlands, ‘Lithuanianisation’. Detecting the material traces of this gradual assimilation, the survival of indigenous practices and any cultural hybridity awaits the attention of archaeologists.

A few years after the subjugation of Prussia, cataclysmic events in the Mediterranean ensured the Order would focus its efforts on sustaining its crusades against pagans and schismatics in the eastern Baltic for virtually the entirety of the next century. In 1291, the fall of Acre, the last Christian outpost in the Holy Land, brought an end to Outremer and called both the effectiveness and purpose of the military orders into question. The Teutonic Order’s state in Prussia has often been described as an aristocratic corporation revelling in its newly acquired landed power, removed from earlier crusading ideals.

The next chapter investigates the extent to which material culture supports this conception.

Notes

- 1 For the sake of clarity and following Poliński (2003), the term stronghold and fortification refers to the *castra* or *grody* associated with the Teutonic Order in thirteenth-century Prussia, whilst castle or *zamek* is used to describe later structures built from brick and stone; the question of terminology is discussed in more detail within the main text.