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The late Fifteenth-Century Utrecht Chronicle of the Teutonic Order : manuscripts, sources, and authorship

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Conclusion

Introduction

By studying the *Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden*, also known as the *Jüngere Hochmeisterchronik*, I aimed to examine the circulation of (historical) knowledge within the Teutonic Order at the end of the fifteenth century. It has been the underlying aim of this study to gain an understanding of the introduction of the order's tradition of history writing to the Dutch Low Countries, far removed from the traditional production centres in Prussia and Livonia, as well as the effects this change of location, and accompanying change of perspective had on the content and purpose of such historical production within the order.

In the preceding chapters I have been able to establish that the *Croniken* was written in the bailiwick of Utrecht, in various phases from 1480 to 1491 and possibly the mid-1490s, by the Utrecht land commander Johan van Drongelen and his personal secretary. The material product of their collaboration is manuscript **We₁**, which can now be classified as an author's copy. I have also shown in detail how the text was constructed, and that the author(s) managed to collect a wide selection of sources – including from locations hundreds of kilometres away from the city of Utrecht. We have therefore come much closer to understanding the specific circumstances under which the chronicle was written, as well as the preconditions of that environment which made it possible to undertake such an ambitious project.

In this concluding chapter, I shall survey the historical development of the Utrecht bailiwick leading up to decades of the *Croniken's* conception at the end of the fifteenth century, providing a context to my previous identification of when, where, and by whom the *Croniken* was created. I shall then return to the findings of this study, focusing on the process of creation of the *Croniken*. Finally, I will conclude with a treatment of the later uses of the chronicle, in the Utrecht bailiwick and in Prussia, Livonia, and the Holy Roman Empire.

The Utrecht bailiwick within the Teutonic Order

The call for the Fifth Crusade (1217–21) attracted considerable interest in the archdiocese of Cologne, largely due to the preaching of Oliver of Paderborn.¹²⁵⁴ For several people from the Low Countries, the crusade was the first time they came into contact with the Teutonic Order. Halfway during the siege of the Egyptian port city Damietta (1218–19), Sweder van Dingede Sr., a nobleman from the County of Cleves, gave the “brothers of the Teutonic House in Jerusalem” a couple of property complexes, including one south of the city of Utrecht, because of “their support of the weak and of the soldiers against the assaults of the Saracens”.¹²⁵⁵ In doing so, he followed the example of Count Adolf of the Mark, who a year earlier during the same siege had offered the order his court at Dieren in Guelders.¹²⁵⁶ Some years later, Sweder’s son Sweder van Dingede Jr. and his wife, bequeathed the order a house and mansion outside the walls of the city of Utrecht, in order to redeem themselves from crusade vows they made earlier.¹²⁵⁷ These two donations formed the foundation for the establishment of a commandery at Utrecht. Later, this commandery became the centre of the Utrecht bailiwick, which started to assert itself as a separate organizational structure in the early fourteenth century.¹²⁵⁸

The author of the *Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden* knew the charters which had been drawn up to record these agreements, and used them to construct the history of the Utrecht bailiwick, which he placed at the end of the chronicle. In the *Croniken* the history of the bailiwick is presented as a continuous sequence of donations to the order, which allow it to constantly expand under every successive land commander. Hans Mol has shown that such a positive representation of continuous growth is unjustified.¹²⁵⁹ After the first properties had been transferred to the order in 1218 and the commandery in Utrecht was founded after 1231, a period of stagnation occurred. The house in the village of Schelluinen in Holland, the foundations of which were laid after 1220, was described to be in a deplorable state as early as 1248. Charters dating between 1265 and 1268 show that the brethren had been forced to abandon the house temporarily and that the rights that the Teutonic Order used to have in Schelluinen had to be reaffirmed, in order for them to reoccupy the house.¹²⁶⁰

¹²⁵⁴ Van Moolenbroek, ‘Signs in the heavens’.

¹²⁵⁵ “quas faciunt fratres domus Theutonicorum in Hierusalem, tum in infirmis tum etiam in militibus contra insultus Sarracenorum sustentandis”: K. Heeringa ed., *Oorkondenboek van het Sticht Utrecht tot 1301* II (Den Haag: Rijksuitgeverij 1940) nr. 668 <<http://www.historici.nl/retroboeken/osu/>>; De Geer van Oudegein, *Archieven* II, nr. 463.

¹²⁵⁶ Sweder van Dingede sr. was mentioned as a witness of Count Adolf’s bestowal of the goods at Dieren. Dieren would become a commandery subject to the Teutonic Order in Koblenz, until it was handed over to the bailiwick of Alden Biesen because of a debt of the grand master to the bailiwick in 1420 and subsequently sold to the Utrecht bailiwick in 1434. De Geer van Oudegein, *Archieven* II, nr. 462.

¹²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, nr. 194.

¹²⁵⁸ U. Arnold, ‘Die Entwicklung von Balleistrukturen des Deutschen Ordens zwischen Mittelrhein und Nordsee - Biesen, Koblenz und Utrecht’, in: J. Mertens ed., *Adel, ridderorde en erfgoed in het Land van Maas en Rijn*. Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van de Duitse Orde in de Balije Biesen 10 (Bilzen 2012) 25–43.

¹²⁵⁹ J.A. Mol, ‘Vechten of verplegen? Ontstaan en begintijd van het huis en de balije Utrecht van de Duitse Orde’, in: J.A. Mol ed., *Vechten, bidden en verplegen. Opstellen over de ridderorden in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*. Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van de Ridderlijke Duitse Orde, Balije van Utrecht 5 (Hilversum: Verloren 2011) 24–46.

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 28; Zuidervaart, *Ridders, priesters en predikanten in Schelluinen*, 30–33.

The reoccupation of Schelluinen occurred during a period of rapid expansion of the bailiwick. Fuelled by support of the comital family of Holland and coinciding with the entrance of several important noblemen from the County of Holland and the Prince-Bishopric of Utrecht into the order, the number of commanderies rose spectacularly from four to thirteen in just two decades between 1261 and 1281.¹²⁶¹ Although the precise circumstances of this expansion remain unclear due to a lack of sources, a convincing case has been made that the brethren in Utrecht changed the way they represented themselves to the outside world, which acted as a catalyst. This follows from transitions in the use of seal emblems by the brethren. The earliest emblems that were used stressed the role of the order in caring for the sick and those in need. This role, building on the tradition as a hospitaller order in its early years in the Holy Land, had received much emphasis in the early thirteenth century, especially in the Holy Roman Empire.¹²⁶² However, between 1249 and 1255 the brethren in Utrecht started to use an emblem that showed Christ with two swords coming from his mouth, emphasizing both the spiritual and worldly power of Christ. More specifically, this emblem with two swords referred to Christ's power to subjugate heathen nations (Revelation 19:15), creating an analogy with the fighting role of the military orders. This was a much more militant message and the hypothesis is that it appealed to the counts of Holland and noblemen in the Low Countries directly.¹²⁶³ It is also evident that this change in the brethren's presentation of the order to outsiders followed events in Prussia, Livonia, and the Holy Land; in each of these three regions the Teutonic Order came under increasing pressure, and desperately needed money and military reinforcements around 1260.¹²⁶⁴

With the loss of the Holy Land in 1291 and the stabilization of the front in Prussia and Livonia in the early fourteenth century, such military strains were becoming less acute, whereas the pastoral and administrative tasks in the bailiwick grew. The brethren's time and attention was being occupied by responsibilities that were not immediately directed at defending the Christian faith. For instance, during the administration of Land Commander Goswijn van Gar-naer (<1337–58) an imposing new convent inside the walls of the city of Utrecht was built which, with the exception of its church, still stands today. In the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century the bailiwick thrived spiritually and economically.¹²⁶⁵ By the mid-fifteenth century the riches that had been gathered in this period of prosperity added a

¹²⁶¹ See Appendix, Figure A.27 and Figure A.28. Interestingly enough, this period of expansion was pinned in between two different periods of expansion of the number of churches where the Teutonic Order had acquired the right to appoint parish priests – often brethren of their own. Between 1240 and 1250 the number of these churches rose from one to seven. A further increase, from nine to fourteen, occurred between 1280 and 1294.

¹²⁶² Note the numerous donations of hospitals until the 1250s, many of which were sold or scaled down soon afterwards: K. Militzer, 'Die Rolle der Spitaler bei den Ritterorden', in: M. Matheus ed., *Funktions- und Strukturwandel spatmittelalterlicher Hospitaler im europaischen Vergleich*. Geschichtliche Landeskunde 56 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner 2005) 213–242, there 229–232; K. van Eickels, 'Knightly Hospitallers or Crusading Knights? Decisive Factors for the Spread of the Teutonic Knights in the Rhineland and the Low Countries 1216–1300', in: H.J. Nicholson ed., *The Military Orders 2: Welfare and Warfare* (Aldershot: Ashgate 1998) 75–80; The Utrecht commandery, just outside the walls of the city, also operated a hospital. It is mentioned twice, in 1267 and in 1287, but nothing is heard of it after that. Ketner ed., *OSU IV*, nr. 1731; De Geer van Oudegein, *Archieven II*, nr. 274.

¹²⁶³ Mol, 'Vechten of verplegen?', 38–41.

¹²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 42–44.

¹²⁶⁵ This is witnessed, for instance, by the efforts of priest-brother Gerard van Vliederveen, who wrote *Cordiale de quatuor novissimis*, an eschatological tractate which has survived in over two hundred Latin manuscripts, fifty Middle Dutch and German translations, and numerous versions in print. Possibly, Vliederveen wrote the text with support of the land commander. Dusch, *De veer utedsten*; Warnar, 'Augustijnken in Pruisen', 131–2; In October 1378, the "schaffenaar" (dispensator) of the Utrecht commandery was given a substantial amount of money (for expenses), paper, and parchment "to write a book". This "schaffenaar"

complicating factor to a few decades of intense and very destructive internal clashes between several brethren seeking the office of the land commander.¹²⁶⁶ One of those, knight-brother Johan van Haeften, spent a few thousand guilders on travel expenses and bribes to advance his election, while donating only two hundred guilders to the grand master in Prussia, who was at that time engaged in the Thirteen Years' War (1454–66) against the Prussian Confederation and the King of Poland.¹²⁶⁷ Crusading as a principal aim around which the activities of the bailiwick were organised was retreating, and the focus of its members was re-oriented more toward worldly and local responsibilities in the bailiwick.

This development can also be identified in the decrease in the movement of personnel between the Utrecht bailiwick and the Holy Land, Prussia, and Livonia. Numerous examples of brethren from the Low Countries being stationed in the Mediterranean Sea, most notably Sicily, are found in the thirteenth century.¹²⁶⁸ Johan van Hoenhorst, mentioned as land commander in Utrecht between 1325 and 1332, had been *Vogt*, or guardian, of Jerwen in Livonia (present day Järvamaa in Estonia) and a candidate for the position of master of Livonia in 1322.¹²⁶⁹ From 1328 until at least 1334 he was also land commander of the Netherlands, the last to use this title.¹²⁷⁰ By this time however, the period of high mobility in the Teutonic Order was coming to an end. Examples such as that of Johan van Hoenhorst or almost each of the grand masters up to Karl of Trier (1311–24), who all moved from one office to the other in the Holy Land, Prussia, Livonia, and/or bailiwicks in the Holy Roman Empire, were becoming increasingly rare – with the exception of members in the bailiwicks under direct control of the grand master, the so-called *Kammerballeien*, which started to emerge around the same period.¹²⁷¹ Shifts in the order's organizational structures in the mid-fourteenth century meant that regionalism became more a prominent feature on different levels of the order. This had a negative impact on the mobility between the different branches of the Teutonic Order.¹²⁷²

may have been Vliederhoven, who is known to hold this function from 1386 onwards, but who stopped working as commander of Tiel in the year before this account book was written. Utrecht, ARDOU, inv.nr. 646, f. 36r; Land Commander Johan van de Zande (<1409-1419) increased the income of the bailiwick that much that he was able to order a new luxurious inventory for the church, including highly decorated liturgical books. Some of these books survive: Van Dijk, 'Missaal'; Zwolle, HCO, ms. 4410; Zwolle, HCO, ms. 4411; Fulda, HLB, Aa 122; See also the *Croniken: Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden*, c.764–6.

¹²⁶⁶ Mol, 'Crisis in the bailiwicks?'

¹²⁶⁷ Utrecht, ARDOU, inv.nr. 330–1, f. 15v.

¹²⁶⁸ Mol, 'Vechten of verplegen?', 37, 44–45.

¹²⁶⁹ Utrecht, ARDOU, inv.nr. 34–6.

¹²⁷⁰ (Land) commander or master of the Netherlands (*partes inferiores*) is a title used by the highest office of the Teutonic Order in the western part of the Holy Roman Empire, an office that existed until the early fourteenth century. From the *partes inferiores* grew the independent bailiwicks Alden Biesen and Utrecht. In some cases, the office was held simultaneously with the office of the (land) commander of Biesen. H. Limburg, 'Partes Inferiores. Beobachtungen zur Verwaltungsstruktur des Deutschen Ordens im Westen des Reiches während des 13. Jahrhunderts', *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 171 (1969) 259–268; Arnold, 'Entwicklung von Balleistrukturen'.

¹²⁷¹ Arnold, 'Entwicklung von Balleistrukturen', 40–41; U. Arnold, 'Europa und die Region. Widerstreitende Kräfte in der Entwicklung des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter', in: Z.H. Nowak ed., *Ritterorden und Region. Politische, soziale und wirtschaftliche Verbindungen im Mittelalter*. Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica VIII (Toruń: UMK 1995) 161–172, there 163–164; For the biographies of the grand masters: Arnold ed., *Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens*; compare also the thirteenth-century example of Edmund of Werth, priest-brother from the Rhineland and bishop of Courland: U. Arnold, 'Edmund von Werth, priester van de Duitse orde en bisschop van Koerland', in: J. Mertens ed., *Leden van de Duitse Orde in de balije Biesen*. Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van de Duitse Orde in de Balije Biesen 1 (Bilzen 1994) 189–214.

¹²⁷² Arnold, 'Europa und die Region'; J. Sarnowsky, 'Regional Problems in the History of the Mendicants and Military Orders', in: J. Sarnowsky ed., *Mendicants, Military Orders and Regionalism in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate 1999) 1–15.

An illustration of this is the way brethren from the Holy Roman Empire were being recruited for service in either Prussia or Livonia. Recruitment campaigns, also in the Low Countries, continued to take place throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such as those in Utrecht in 1411 and 1435, intended to recruit for Livonia.¹²⁷³ However, a career in one of the traditional regions of crusader activity of the order had become by-and-large independent of a career in one of the bailiwicks, as if it were separate orders, and from the mid-fifteenth century onwards there are signs that at least in Utrecht and Alden Biesen, a career in the bailiwicks was being valued higher than one in Prussia and Livonia.¹²⁷⁴ At the same time, we see efforts to limit the recruitment of brethren for the bailiwicks themselves to certain geographic or social backgrounds; thus increasing the order's invested interests in the region.¹²⁷⁵ One consequence of such developments is that it also becomes more difficult to promote the order's wider interests to the bailiwicks, particularly the interests in Prussia and Livonia. From the early sixteenth century the bailiwicks in the northwest of the Holy Roman Empire even developed a combined effort to resist payments intended for the order in Prussia and Livonia.¹²⁷⁶

Despite the fact that these regionalist tendencies are well emphasized for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,¹²⁷⁷ the practical implications of this for the brethren in the bailiwicks in the Holy Roman Empire are much less clear.¹²⁷⁸ All military orders were characterized by a constant interaction between regional and universal tendencies,¹²⁷⁹ but it is not easy to define for the Teutonic Order a coherent timeline of structural changes in this interaction.¹²⁸⁰ Moreover, the fact that this interaction was apparent, also means that it would be an exaggeration to say that the bailiwicks in the Holy Roman Empire, in this case Utrecht, had become entirely detached from the branches of the order in Prussia

¹²⁷³ J.A. Mol, 'Nederlandse ridderbroeders van de Duitse Orde in Lijfland. Herkomst, afkomst en carrières', in: J.A. Mol ed., *Vechten, bidden en verplegen. Opstellen over de ridderorden in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*. Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van de Ridderlijke Duitse Orde, Balije van Utrecht 5 (Hilversum: Verloren 2011) 160–187, there 173–175.

¹²⁷⁴ Transfers to Prussia or Livonia were even sometimes associated with punishment, as shown by examples from Utrecht and Alden Biesen: Van Eickels, 'Knightly Hospitallers or Crusading Knights?', 170; Mol, 'Nederlandse ridderbroeders', 176.

¹²⁷⁵ See chapter 4.3, "Career". Regarding the priest-brethren of the Utrecht bailiwick: Stapel, 'Priests in the military orders', 117–120; For a mid-fifteenth-century example from the Alden Biesen bailiwick: D. Gröger-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht während der Reformationszeit: die Landkommende zwischen Rebellion und Staatsbildung*. Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 68 (Weimar: VDG 2015) 30.

¹²⁷⁶ Gröger-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 62–63.

¹²⁷⁷ A classic publication on this issue is still R. ten Haaf, *Deutschordensstaat und Deutschordensballeien. Untersuchungen über Leistung und Sonderung der Deutschordensprovinzen in Deutschland vom 13. Bis zum 16. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 1954); see also: Maschke, 'Inneren Wandlungen'; and regarding the Utrecht bailiwick, drawing on Werner Reese: Gröger-Schiemann, *Die Deutschordensballei Utrecht*, 29–36; W. Reese, 'Gesamtdeutsche und territoriale Zusammenhänge in der Geschichte des Deutschritterordens der Niederlande', *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 83/84 (1936-1937) 223–272.

¹²⁷⁸ Much emphasis has been put on the vocation and lifestyle of the brethren, their attitude towards personal possessions, and a growing consciousness amongst the brethren of their noble status. Much less attention has been given to structural changes in the interactions between the brethren, forms of exchange, etc. E.g.: Maschke, 'Inneren Wandlungen'; Mol, 'Hospice of the German Nobility'.

¹²⁷⁹ Whether in the Iberian Peninsula or in the Baltic region, the military orders of medieval Europe considered themselves defenders of all Christianity and thus claimed to be of universal importance. Yet at the same time, and this is quite different from other monastic orders, many have close and sometimes explicit ties to a specific region: note for instance the *Militiae Christi Livoniae* (also known as the Livonian Brothers of the Sword) or the Order of Calatrava in Spain. This interaction between universal and regional tendencies takes place in all military orders to some extent or another. Here following K. Elm, 'Die Ordines Militares. Ein Ordenszötus zwischen Einheit und Vielfalt', in: Z. Hunyadi and J. Laszlovszky eds., *The Crusades and the Military Orders. Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity* (Budapest: Central European University Press 2001) 351–377.

¹²⁸⁰ The effects of the loss of the sovereignty in Prussia in 1466 on the position of the brethren in the bailiwicks, in regard to the order as a whole are, for instance, not well known.

and Livonia, and that the Teutonic Order had become an ossified, static organization. Take for instance the examples of Iwan of Cortenbach, land commander in the bailiwick of Alden Biesen to the south of the Utrecht bailiwick,¹²⁸¹ and John of Malkaw, a priest-brother of the Teutonic Order and papal diplomat.¹²⁸² Although both their careers are exceptional in many ways, they show, like the fifteenth-century dissemination of the indulgences and privileges¹²⁸³, in which Malkaw was also personally involved¹²⁸⁴, that the Teutonic Order, during the fifteenth century at least, despite a growing regional orientation, remained still an internationally orientated monastic order where people, information, and ideas could easily flow from one place to the next.¹²⁸⁵

¹²⁸¹ The career of Iwan of Cortenbach is a particularly good example of mobility within the Teutonic Order in the first half of the fifteenth century. According to the *Liège Commandery Chronicle* he travelled from Alden Biesen to Prussia eight times, during one of which journeys he may have participated at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1410. In 1417, he represented the Teutonic Order at the Council of Constance and, in the same year, took part in the Hussite Wars in Bohemia. He died in 1434 from injuries which he sustained during his last visit to Prussia. Apart from this, Cortenbach was also a council member and chamberlain of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy and in 1424 he was stadtholder for John the Pitiless, duke of Bavaria-Straubing. J. Corstjens, 'Iwan van Cortenbach. Landcommandeur van de balije Biesen (1411-1434)', *Gemerts Heem* 1989 (1989) 4–16; Gemert, GAGB, Schepenprotocol Gemert R101, inner side of the back guard leaf.

¹²⁸² John of Malkaw was born in Prussia and had a career as preacher, commander, and papal diplomat in different places from Cologne and southwards, especially in Strasbourg. A. Ehlers, 'John Malkaw of Prussia. A Case of Individual Mobility in the Teutonic Order, c.1400', in: J. Burgtorf and H.J. Nicholson eds., *International Mobility in the Military Orders (Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries). Travelling on Christ's Business* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama 2006) 75–84; In fact, mobility as defined by brethren travelling back and forth to various locations of the Teutonic Order while keeping a secure base, continued to occur in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: K. van Eickels, 'Secure Base and Constraints of Mobility. The Rheno-Flemish Bailiwick of the Teutonic Knights between Regional Bonds and Service to the Grand Master in the Later Middle Ages', in: J. Burgtorf and H.J. Nicholson eds., *International Mobility in the Military Orders (Twelfth to Fifteenth Centuries). Travelling on Christ's Business* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama 2006) 167–172.

¹²⁸³ The folding map Ehlers provided with his study is particularly insightful in this regard: Ehlers, *Ablaßpraxis*.

¹²⁸⁴ Papal privileges and indulgences that he secured were copied and disseminated to many other commanderies of the Teutonic Order within two or three years, sometimes even months. Ehlers, 'John Malkaw', 78; The *Croniken* includes translations of some of these documents: *Croniken van der Duytscher Oirde*, c.593–597, c.606–615.

¹²⁸⁵ This is also clear from what we have been able to gather from the Utrecht bailiwick. The Utrecht bailiwick welcomed numerous representatives and visitations of the order from Prussia in the mid-fifteenth century. Land Commander Johan van Haeften, when seeking office in 1455–7, travelled back and forth to numerous places. His visits included two journeys to the German master in Frankfurt, and several journeys to the Duke of Burgundy or his representatives in The Hague, Utrecht, and Brussels. Simultaneously, he was visited in Utrecht by the commander of Mewe in Prussia. In 1473 and 1474, negotiations between the Hanse and England took place in the city of Utrecht, which may also have attracted some officials of the order. The bishop of Reval, a member of the Teutonic Order, visited the Teutonic House in Utrecht in 1488 (see chapter 3.6). Johan van Drongelen, land commander between 1469 and 1492, at least on one occasion travelled to Frankfurt, for a chapter meeting regarding the election of a new German master in 1479 (see chapter 4.2).

Creating the *Croniken*

The *Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden* as chronicle on the history of the Teutonic Order offers a possibility to study these late medieval tensions between regional and universal tendencies in the Teutonic Order further. It is a unique source from the end of the fifteenth century showing how the brethren thought about their order in a highly transformational period in the decades after the loss of sovereignty in Prussia in 1466; a period which also showed a growing reorientation of the bailiwicks towards autonomy.¹²⁸⁶ The *Croniken* represents the Teutonic Order as a blessed corporation of nobility, historically supported by popes, emperors, and numerous princes and lords. This knightly order, by virtue of its long-lasting fight against heathens, had acquired the perpetual right, the *Croniken* repeats time and again, to retain the lands it had conquered from the heathens.¹²⁸⁷ The consequence of focussing on these perpetual rights is that the author offers a vision for the future of the Teutonic Order as a corporation of celibate noblemen whose primary day-to-day business is similar to that of a landlord. Once, but not necessarily anymore, this corporation had been engaged in the fights against heathens.

At the same time, however – and this is a particularly fresh angle in scholarly research into the chronicle – the *Croniken* provides new insights into the ways in which the Teutonic Order was still able to function as an international community in this period, fostering the circulation of people and knowledge between the different parts of Europe where the order operated, despite increasing regional orientation of the branches of the order. From the analysis of the origin of the sources used by the author of the *Croniken* and the dissemination of the manuscripts in this study, a cultural network spanning Northwestern, Central and Northeastern Europe emerges. My study of the *Croniken* also shows how the world of the Teutonic Order interacted with communities in urban circles, both in the Low Countries and – although this is only touched upon in this study – in Prussia and Livonia.

In this study, I have shown that the *Croniken* was written in various phases, the most substantial of which can be dated around 1480 and around 1491.¹²⁸⁸ Additionally, I have shown that manuscript **We**₁, now kept at the Central Archive of the Teutonic Order in Vienna, shows signs of authorial presence; the presence of meaningful editorial amendments, evidence that source texts were directly used in the creation of the manuscript, and, though less directly significant, the relationship to all other manuscripts containing the *Croniken*, and some codicological information, all make clear that manuscript **We**₁ has to be classified as an ‘author’s copy’: a manuscript written by or in close collaboration with the author himself.¹²⁸⁹ These determinations allow us situate the creation of the text in its historical context with much more precision than has been possible before.

¹²⁸⁶ This transformational period is characterized by the fact that there is a growing consciousness amongst the brethren of their noble status; the management of the order’s possessions is increasingly aimed at maintaining a corresponding lifestyle. Simultaneously, the original vocation of the order was fading into the background. Regarding this period: Maschke, ‘Inneren Wandlungen’; Mol, ‘Hospice of the German Nobility’.

¹²⁸⁷ In this way, the *Croniken* builds on the arguments put forward in the Teutonic Order regarding their role and origin during the fifteenth century: a strong historic link with nobility from the Holy Roman Empire; a continuing responsibility to care for the lands they had converted into Christendom; and the fact that the fate of the order should be equalled with the fate of Christianity as a whole. Souhr, ‘Von jeher Fredeschilt’.

¹²⁸⁸ Chapter 2.3.

¹²⁸⁹ Chapter 2.4.

Manuscript **We₁** was written by the notary public Hendrik Gerardsz. van Vianen, whose hand also appears in more than two dozens of land charters from the Utrecht bailiwick (dating from 1479 to 1509) and in a manuscript of the Middle Dutch translation of the *Sachsenspiegel* (dated around 1499–1500) which was owned by at least two sixteenth-century land commanders in Utrecht. In all likelihood he was the personal secretary of Land Commander Johan van Drongelen. Although Hendrik van Vianen still worked for the Teutonic Order on a few occasions after Drongelen's death in 1492, including the completion of the *Croniken*, most of his work as scribe was on behalf of Johan van Drongelen. It is only a year before Drongelen's death that Hendrik van Vianen demonstrably started to pursue a career as notary public. Vianen was probably also responsible for the entire production process of manuscript **We₁**; the codicological and palaeographical evidence suggests that the various tasks, such as writing, rubrication, and preparing the quires, were all executed by a single person. In addition, there are also some distinct similarities with the physical characteristics of the *Sachsenspiegel* manuscript which Vianen composed several years later, further corroborating the hypothesis that he was responsible for the production of manuscript **We₁** (chapters 2 and 3).

A computational analysis of the stylistic characteristics of the text has allowed me to establish with a reasonable degree of probability that Hendrik van Vianen was responsible for translating the privileges that are included in the *Croniken* into Middle Dutch. He may further occasionally have been involved in the creation of the content, and is the most likely candidate for the authorship of the last chapter of the *Croniken*, on the life of Johan van Drongelen, which was written following the death of the land commander, as well as of some other late amendments to the text. His employer Johan van Drongelen, however, is the person whose profile fits that of the author of the *Croniken* the best. All evidence suggests that he was the prime instigator of the *Croniken*, who collected the sources and wrote most of the text. The exact nature of the collaboration between Drongelen and Vianen is difficult to apprehend, but, based on palaeographic and codicological evidence, must have been very close.

Little is known about the person of Hendrik van Vianen, but much more can be said about Johan van Drongelen. Throughout his career as a knight-brother of the Utrecht bailiwick, Drongelen showed great ambition. In Schelluinen, the first commandery he administered, he invested significant sums of his own private money to renovate and extend the buildings of the commandery, which long failed to flourish; thus, he created a representable house that generated enough income to support the noble lifestyle of a knight-brother. Later, in Utrecht, he would follow a similar policy, ordering the construction of a more comfortable residence for the land commander. When he took up the office of land commander in 1469, he immediately commenced a reform of the bailiwick. The central components of this reform were a strict regiment, observance of the rules, and the pursuit of a certain level of devotion (even though the latter was fairly modest, and primarily focused on outward appearance). However, the reform was also aimed at considerably reducing the number of knight-brethren and emphasising the knightly stature of the order; as a result, the small number of remaining knight-brethren could enjoy good incomes at one of the commanderies, capable of supporting a costly noble lifestyle. Due to the resulting increased exclusivity of the membership, the recruitment of new knight-brethren could more easily be regulated. Johan van Drongelen made good use of this opportunity, as he attracted new knight-brothers mostly from the County of Holland, his own county of origin, instead of the Duchy of Guelders as had previously often been the case.

Some of the aspirations of Johan van Drongelen were already visible at a young age, when he joined the Teutonic Order in the mid to late 1440s. The list of noblemen and –women he invited to his entry ceremony, in itself a unique document, reads as a who-is-who of aristocratic circles in the County of Holland and the Prince-Bishopric of Utrecht. The genealogical reconstructions suggest that Drongelen was related to most of these noblemen only via his paternal great-grandparents, although it remains unclear how he may have been acquainted with many of these men and women. His direct paternal family background is largely undetermined, and in all likelihood was humbler than the list of invitees would suggest. This is at least clearly the case for his maternal family. The constant changes and additions to his own family coat of arms and the hard to verify family tree that was displayed on the wall in the church of the Teutonic Order in Utrecht show someone who was highly conscious of his own family background and (potential lack of) full noble roots. It also shows a person who has an intimate knowledge of heraldic symbols and genealogy. In fact, Drongelen gained a reputation in the Northern Low Countries for being an expert in establishing the genealogy of noble families and a regular visitor of the archives where the documents to support such genealogical inquiries could be found (chapter 4).

In these characteristics, Johan van Drongelen indeed matches the person specifications of the author of the *Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden*, in which the knightly status and genealogical background of the grand masters and land commanders mentioned in the text is frequently highlighted. Furthermore, the analysis of the sources in chapter 3 has revealed that the *Croniken* must have been written by someone with excellent knowledge of where to find and how to employ numerous old texts and documents from various archives. The number of sources used and combined in the *Croniken* is impressive, and shows how ambitious the project must have been.¹²⁹⁰

The prologue commences with a history of Mount Zion in the Holy Land, where the hospital of the Teutonic Order was supposed to have been established later. Guide books to the Holy Land, as well as the Hospitallers' origin legends provided inspiration for this prologue, for which a selection of biblical texts were used. This included at least one Latin text, Petrus Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, but further primarily Middle Dutch history bibles and biblical paraphrases. Johan van Drongelen used Jacob van Maerlant's *Rijmbijbel* (the translation of the *Historia scholastica* in verse), the Middle Dutch translation of James of Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, the *Northern Netherlands History Bible*, and the *Pseudo-Bonaventura-Ludolphian Life of Christ*. Furthermore, he used a copy of a series of beautifully decorated Middle Dutch bibles, known as the *Utrecht Bibles*. Since the history of Mount Zion is narrated up to the time of the foundation of the Teutonic Order in the Holy Land in 1190, these biblical sources were further complemented by a range of texts

¹²⁹⁰ The forty to fifty sources used by Johan van Drongelen are considerably less than the more than hundred sources mentioned in the *Divisiechroniek*, which was printed in the County of Holland in 1517: C.P.H.M. Tilmans, *Aurelius en de Divisiechroniek van 1517. Historiografie en humanisme in Holland in de tijd van Erasmus*. Hollandse studiën 21 (Hilversum: Verloren 1988) 214–215; However, it is much more than other fifteenth and sixteenth century historiographers in the Low Countries, such as the author of the *Kattendijke chronicle* (seven); Heraut van Beyeren (twenty to thirty); the Clerc uten laghen landen (three); and Jan van Naaldwijk (twenty-five): Levelt, *Jan van Naaldwijk*, 78 (specifically note 29); Verbij-Schillings, *Beeldvorming*, 64–78; The author of the *Ältere Hochmeisterchronik* used only a handful of sources: Olivier, *L'Ancienne Chronique des Grand-Maîtres*, 311–480 (part III, chapter 1).

containing histories of the crusades, including texts by James of Vitry, William of Tyre, Vincent of Beauvais, Oliver of Paderborn, Richard of San Germano, Johannes de Beke, and Ludolf of Sudheim.

For Prussian and Livonian history, Drongelen turned to almost the full range of the standard historiographical repertoire of the Teutonic Order: he used the chronicles of Peter of Dusburg, Nikolaus of Jeroschin, and Aeneas Sylvius, as well as the *Kurze Hochmeisterchronik*, the *Ältere Hochmeisterchronik*, the *De primordiis ordinis Theutonici narratio* (possibly via Hermann Korner's world chronicle, the *Chronica novella*), the *Bericht Hermann von Salzas*, the *Bericht Hartmanns von Heldringen*, the *Livländische Reimchronik* and its conjectural continuation, the *Jüngere Livländische Reimchronik*, several other sources on Livonian history, and finally the order's statutes (in Middle Dutch, and possibly in Latin and High German as well).

No single library in Europe had all these texts. Some texts circulated in the Northern Low Countries, that is, close to the Utrecht commandery, but many did not. Several of the crusading texts used for the *Croniken* were better disseminated in the Southern Low Countries, bordering on Northern France. Other texts, such as the extensive list of texts on the history of the Teutonic Order, were available in many places in Prussia and Livonia, but were unlikely to be found in Western Europe. Moreover, the only one of these texts for which evidence exists that it was available in the Holy Roman Empire prior to the *Croniken's* creation, the *Ältere Hochmeisterchronik*, was perused by Drongelen in a version that is found in manuscripts which circulated in Prussia rather than in the Holy Roman Empire. In addition to these narrative sources, numerous archival documents were used, many of which were kept in the bailiwick archive in Utrecht; some, however, seem to have derived from archives of the Teutonic Order in Prussia and perhaps Marburg, Livonia, and the Hanse cities of Bremen and Lübeck. Archival material from the Order of St John may also have been consulted. Johan van Drongelen must therefore have taken advantage of his travels, sometimes far, to collect further materials for his chronicle. While in most cases, the exact origin of the materials used for the *Croniken* must remain uncertain, one location can be determined with reasonable certainty: the town of Marburg in Hesse, over 400 kilometres from Utrecht. Marburg is the place where Drongelen must have gathered various texts relating to the lives of St Elisabeth of Hungary and her brother-in-law Konrad of Thuringia, who became grand master of the Teutonic Order and laid the foundation for the important hospital of the order at Marburg (chapter 3.6, "Saint Elisabeth and the Marburg connection"). While it is possible that Drongelen travelled to Marburg with the sole intent to gather materials for the *Croniken*, it is quite possible that he took advantage of travel for other reasons in order to collect sources; in 1479, for instance, he attended the general chapter in Frankfurt, which may have provided an opportunity to gather texts en route.

The methodology by which Johan van Drongelen combined all these sources into a single account had two principal and opposing tendencies, one inclusive, and one selective. For each historical episode, he tended to combine the various sources that provided accounts. In the majority of cases, this included both a Latin original (e.g., Peter of Dusburg; Vincent of Beauvais) and translations in the vernacular (e.g., Nikolaus of Jeroschin; Jacob van Maerlant). On some occasions such synchronised source texts each provided certain unique details, but this was not always the case. Perhaps a desire to be complete led Drongelen to peruse multiple sources in order to describe a single episode, even when these sources did not significantly complement each other. At the same time, and in an opposing tendency, he

was highly selective in what he chose to include: only a select number of passages of each source text was included in the new chronicle. Having adapted the materials of his sources, he occasionally added sentences of his own, regularly factual or explanatory in nature. The whole process resulted in a remarkably coherent text with numerous internal cross-references and very little duplication. The *Croniken* was put together with great skill.

It is unclear how Johan van Drongelen had acquired the composing and writing skills required to create such a complex historiographical text, or even where he picked up his interest in historiography. However, I have previously shown that Drongelen was connected with a group of well-known and prolific historiographers in the urban centres of the Northern Low Countries, who exchanged texts and manuscripts with each other.¹²⁹¹ Drongelen was personally acquainted with at least two of these chroniclers, Theodericus Pauli and Johannes a Leydis, and he had asked Pauli to write a chronicle on the Brederode family for him shortly before he started working on manuscript **We**₁. There is also reason to believe that the *Croniken* was used as a source to add materials to a chronicle previously written by Leydis, whereas works by Pauli may have been used for the *Croniken*.

There is some evidence that the *Croniken* was not the only chronicle Drongelen wrote. This is suggested by a near identical passage in two chronicles, the *Brederode Chronicle* by Johannes a Leydis and the Middle Dutch *Fasciculus temporum*, printed by Johan Veldener in Utrecht in 1480, which combines a translation of Werner Rolevinck's world chronicle with, and those are of interest here, a selection of regional chronicles. In the passage as presented in the *Brederode Chronicle*, Leydis states that Johan van Drongelen told him about having visited archives to corroborate claims of ancestry of the Brederode family; in the *Fasciculus temporum* Drongelen's name is replaced by the first person singular.¹²⁹² Interestingly enough, I have also found further evidence of links between the Middle Dutch *Fasciculus temporum* and the *Croniken*. A now lost codex containing a handwritten version of the Middle Dutch *Fasciculus temporum*, the only known handwritten version of the text, also contained the entire *Croniken* (manuscript **[Al-Sc]**). Another codex with the Middle Dutch *Fasciculus temporum* contained a description of Livonia.¹²⁹³ Last but not least, the *Fasciculus temporum*, printed in 1480 and thus roughly simultaneous with the first production phase of manuscript **We**₁, contains a paragraph that summarizes the information of several chapters of the *Croniken*, mainly from its prologue.¹²⁹⁴ If indeed Johan van Drongelen had written (parts of) the Middle Dutch *Fasciculus temporum*, in addition to the *Croniken*, the Utrecht land commander was a well-rounded historiographer. Drongelen showed he was capable of writing and researching diverse texts such as an intricate history of his own religious order; regional histories intended for a broader audience; and genealogical enquiries. Such a broad skill set fits well with the complex nature of the *Croniken* that I have presented in this study: the large number of sources from various locations; the way these sources are actually used in the chapters, often combining several sources at once; and the coherent and consistent way the chronicle was presented as a whole (chapter 3).

¹²⁹¹ Regarding this group of historiographers: Stapel and De Vries, 'Leydis, Pauli, and Berchen revisited'.

¹²⁹² Chapter 4.3, "Historiography".

¹²⁹³ Chapter 2.1.

¹²⁹⁴ Chapter 2.3.

* * *

The specific circumstances under which the *Croniken* was written led to a work that was rather different from previously existing Teutonic Order chronicles.¹²⁹⁵ First, in contrast to the vast majority of these chronicles, the *Croniken* was composed in the Holy Roman Empire and by someone very familiar with historiographical traditions existing in Northwest Europe. Second, as I have argued, the emergence of the *Croniken* and contemporary historiography of other military orders is linked to the activities of the Order of St John. Only shortly before work on manuscript **We**₁ began, the Order of St John had initiated an unprecedented campaign to publicize their success in defending Rhodes – eliciting responses from competing military orders across Europe.

In order to describe the order's historical role in fighting heathen enemies, Johan van Drongelen was not able to use the history of the local houses of the Teutonic Order in Utrecht. The main function of these houses was to generate revenue and recruit brethren in service of the military campaigns, and to offer pastoral care in the numerous churches the brethren served. A focus on either of the Prussian or the Livonian branch of the order, like Peter of Dusburg or the author of the *Livländische Reimchronik* had done, was not obvious from the standpoint of one of the bailiwicks. Drongelen, therefore, had to use a different template for his chronicle, which he found in the genre of the *gesta*, structuring the narrative by focussing on a sequence of officeholders. From all the sources at his disposal Drongelen carefully crafted a partly factual, partly fictitious, uninterrupted sequence of the successive holders of the highest office in the order, the grand masters, accompanied by an elaborate grounding of the order's history in biblical and crusade narratives, which in effect belittled the origins of the Order of St John. Such a template emphasized continuity, and imparted an impression of venerable antiquity onto the order, thus legitimizing the order's existence. In an age when the order's authority and legitimacy was under severe challenge in the Baltic region, such legitimization became increasingly important. It is no coincidence that following the loss of all power in Prussia in 1525, when Grand Master Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach turned Prussia in a secular duchy under Polish crown, the dissemination of the *Croniken* surged.

Drongelen's new template for the order's historiography was an innovation in the order's traditions of historical writing. Even the *Ältere Hochmeisterchronik* (Older Grand Masters Chronicle) does not focus very strongly on the office of the grand masters, despite its (nineteenth-century) name. The only existing texts that did, the *Kurze Hochmeisterchronik* and the grand masters' catalogues, were important source of inspiration for the *Croniken*, but themselves much shorter and more limited, geographically for instance, in scope. Given the popularity of *gestae* which focused on sequences of officeholders of the Teutonic Order in the sixteenth century (e.g., the *Kleine Meisterchronik*; Gregor

¹²⁹⁵ For the following, see chapter 3.2, "A shift from the land to its members: choosing a template for the order's history".

Spieß' *Chronica der teutzchen maister*; the *Kurze Hochmeisterchronik*; and of course the *Croniken* itself), the structure of the *Croniken* has a particular appeal to its audience.

In fact, the chronicle may have been targeted at several audiences. First and foremost, judging from the language and the inclusion of the bailiwick chronicle, the *Croniken* must have been intended to appeal to the brethren in the Utrecht bailiwick. By adding the bailiwick chronicle at the end of the chronicle Johan van Drongelen created the impression that the bailiwick was part of something much larger: a legendary order with firm roots in biblical times and with a proven track record in Prussia and Livonia. In that sense the *Croniken* served a local purpose: some of its messages, such as the spiritual content of the prologue, the emphasis on the knightly status of the order, the order's track record of close corroboration with important members of society, an aversion to internal conflict and disobedience, but also to excessively stringent officials, and the overt legitimization of the order's perpetual land ownership (even though the battles against the heathens had become a matter of the past), will have served an audience of brethren in the bailiwick well. Drongelen's aforementioned reform program which focused on exclusivity and knightly status, modest devotion, and obedience, is mirrored by much of the content of the *Croniken*.¹²⁹⁶ Furthermore, during the years prior to when the *Croniken* was written, the Utrecht bailiwick gave shelter to several brethren who had returned, often disillusioned, from Prussia. Besides the high costs and internal friction their return to the bailiwick caused,¹²⁹⁷ these brethren brought home stories and experiences of their stay in Prussia and Livonia.¹²⁹⁸ This will have reinforced the perception that the brethren in the bailiwick were part of a wider organization that was, or at least had been, actively engaged in military action. However, by the mid-1470s the last of these brethren had died, causing a need for the brethren to find other means for keeping the memory of their own history alive.

There are significant indications, however, that the *Croniken* was at the same time aimed at a much larger audience, well beyond the confines of the Utrecht bailiwick.¹²⁹⁹ This can be deduced from the ways in which some particular sources were used in the *Croniken*. Very few sources were incorporated word-for-word in the *Croniken*. However, texts about the Teutonic Order that were seldomly used as sources for other chronicles of the order, were more likely to be included in their entirety by Drongelen. Examples are the *Bericht Hermann von Salzas* and *Bericht Hartmanns von Heldringen*. Other, better known chronicles were greatly abridged. Drongelen deliberately chose to recount in full those narratives which were not already included in the chronicle of Peter of Dusburg, its translation by Nikolaus of Jeroschin, and its fifteenth-century prose adaptation, the *Ältere Hochmeisterchronik*. This appears to be an indication that Drongelen also had an audience in mind that knew the narratives presented in texts like those by Dusburg and Jeroschin, and the *Ältere Hochmeisterchronik*. This type of audience was unlikely to be found in the Utrecht bailiwick: although I have shown that the brethren in the bailiwicks, including probably Utrecht, were not as deprived from

¹²⁹⁶ See chapter 4.3, "Career".

¹²⁹⁷ Mol, 'Crisis in the bailiwicks?'

¹²⁹⁸ Compare for instance *Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden*, c.646, c.701.

¹²⁹⁹ For the following, see chapter 3.6, "Dynamics of exchange".

the rich tradition of historical texts by the Teutonic Order as a quick examination of the dissemination of the manuscripts would suggest, it is not likely that these brethren were as well versed in the full range of the order's chronicles as the brethren in Prussia and Livonia.

Furthermore, all the various privileges and indulgences included in the *Croniken* have a general purpose, applying to all the brethren of the order in Europe. Privileges applicable exclusively to the Utrecht bailiwick, even important ones, are not mentioned, even though they were available to Drongelen and Vianen in the bailiwick's archives. The choice to include documents pertaining to the entire order, but omit those relating to the bailiwick only, suggests that Drongelen may have been deliberately aiming his text at a general audience in the Teutonic Order too, and not merely at the brethren in the Utrecht bailiwick.¹³⁰⁰ Likewise, the list of Prussian and Livonian possessions of the order at the end of the grand masters' part underscores the author's perspective of the order, which was, at least for a large part, orientated on the Baltic region. We know that the *Croniken* was disseminated in Prussia and Livonia very soon after the completion of the chronicle. It may be possible that such a quick and widespread dissemination of the text was envisaged by Johan van Drongelen from the very start of the project, although it is hard to say whether this was actually carried out. Problematic in this regard is the fact that Johan van Drongelen died in 1492, leaving behind a manuscript that was nearly finished.

¹³⁰⁰ Note that the Low German language spoken in Livonia, where, based on the current evidence, the dissemination of the *Croniken* outside the Utrecht bailiwick may first have started (chapter 2.1), is rather similar to Middle Dutch. Especially the Livonian manuscript **Ta** is orthographically close to the Middle Dutch manuscripts of the *Croniken*: "Dyth ist dat prologus vann Duitschenn Orden vann Unnser Leven Frouwen van Jherusalem, dat erste fundamente, und begin vann Croniken van den Duitschen Orden van der Ritterschap van der huise unnd hospitaal Unnser Leven Frouwen van Jherusalem, dair Unnse Leve Frouwe und moder goitz Maria in wonde": Tartu, UR, Mscr. 154, f. 1r; "Dit is dat prologus van der Duytscher Oirden van Onnser Liever Vrouwen van Jherusalem, dat yerste fundament ende beginne van den Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden van der ridderschap van den huse ende hospitaal Onnser Liever Vrouwen van Jherusalem, daer Onse Lieve Vrouwe die moeder gods Maria in woenden": *Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden*, c.75.

Dissemination and reception

The dissemination of the *Croniken*, especially in regard to the extant German manuscripts, is a predominantly sixteenth-century affair and takes off after 1525 (Appendix, Figure A.29). The *Croniken* is currently known in several variations, traditionally divided in a Middle Dutch branch, a Livonian or Low German branch, and a Prussian or High German branch. The Utrecht bailiwick chronicle is included in all Middle Dutch manuscripts, but present in none of the German manuscripts (where it is sometimes replaced by other, locally significant texts). At what point it was omitted, is unclear. There are also two adaptations, also without a bailiwick chronicle, both in High German, by the Waiblingen brothers and by Christoph Jan Weissenfels, although in both cases it is unclear to what extent these chronicles were adapted in comparison to other manuscripts of the *Croniken*.

The Middle Dutch and German traditions have not interacted with each other and were, it seems, separated from each other when Hendrik van Vianen was still working on manuscript **We₁** – but after Johan van Drongelen’s death in 1492.¹³⁰¹ The later additions to manuscript **We₁**, which were made by Hendrik van Vianen, including amendments to the list of Prussian and Livonian cities and commanderies, are present in all German manuscripts of the *Croniken* that were produced in Prussia and Livonia, but absent in the extant Middle Dutch copies of the text. It is possible that an early copy of manuscript **We₁**, which formed the basis of the further Middle Dutch tradition, was made before the new content was added to the author’s copy. It should also be noted that no copies of manuscript **We₁** were made after that. We also know that manuscript **We₁** was present in both Mergentheim in Franconia and the Alden Biesen bailiwick in the seventeenth century. Possibly, the manuscript was no longer present in the Utrecht bailiwick. In the Utrecht bailiwick the *Croniken* functioned as a book of reference or archive. It was not kept in the library, but instead along with administrative documents and copies of the order’s statutes.¹³⁰² In addition, the *Croniken* may have been used in an indulgence campaign to support the campaign of the master of Livonia against the schismatic Russians. At least three, possibly four Middle Dutch copies were written between circa 1508 and circa 1509–10, simultaneous with the sale of indulgences in the Low Countries. The oldest of those manuscripts, manuscript **Ge**, was used – directly or indirectly – as an exemplar for the other copies, manuscripts **Ut₁** and the conjectural manuscript **[Ma₁]** used by Antonius Matthaeus for his edition of the *Croniken* published in 1710. There have been other, complete, manuscripts of the *Croniken* in Middle Dutch: manuscript **[Al-Sc]** that was mentioned earlier, and possibly manuscripts **[Mx]**, **[Wa]**, **[Ws₁]**, and **[Ws₂]**.¹³⁰³ All of these are presumed lost.¹³⁰⁴

It is impossible to determine when or how exactly the *Croniken* came to circulate in Prussia and Livonia. Between the final production phase of manuscript **We₁**, to be dated after Johan van Drongelen’s death in 1492 and possibly as late as 1496, and the first unequivocal use of the text in the Baltic region by the Waiblingen brothers in 1528, very little is known about the fate of the text. There are some possible indications of earlier dissemination: the *Croniken* may have

¹³⁰¹ The chapter (c.774) that describes Johan van Drongelen’s death is included in all extant complete Middle Dutch *Croniken* manuscripts.

¹³⁰² Utrecht, ARDOU, inv.nr. 53.4. See Appendix, A.2 (book inventories).

¹³⁰³ And, in addition, a number of manuscripts containing only partial transcripts, most often of the bailiwick chronicle.

¹³⁰⁴ For the dissemination of the Middle Dutch *Croniken* manuscripts, see chapter 2.1, “Dissemination in the Low Countries”.

been used in Livonia in 1508 by the author of *Eynne schonne hysthorie*.¹³⁰⁵ A schematic representation of the grand masters' coats of arms, difficult to date, but possibly produced in Prussia in the late fifteenth century, mirrors those drawn in the manuscripts of the *Croniken*.¹³⁰⁶ When in 1528 the Waiblingen brothers, who were stationed near Königsberg in Prussia, sent their adaptation of the *Croniken* to Austria, the *Croniken* may therefore already have been known in Prussia for a substantial amount of time. In 1530, Adrian von Waiblingen travelled to the German master in Mergentheim, Franconia, and it is likely that he brought another copy of his *Croniken* adaptation with him; it was subsequently used by the chancellor of the German master, Gregor Spieß, for his chronicle of the German masters, which was completed in 1531. Franconia was the primary focus of dissemination of the Waiblingen brothers' text: almost all of the manuscript copies of the Waiblingen adaptation that can be located were produced in Franconia. Also significant is that, from the current locations of the extant manuscripts, it seems that most were produced for use by brethren of the Teutonic Order.¹³⁰⁷ By this stage in the dissemination, the chronicle had become known as the "Prussian chronicle"; the bailiwick chronicle was omitted – perhaps already at an early stage in the *Croniken*'s dissemination to Prussia and Livonia – and all references to the Utrecht bailiwick were lost; when the first evidence of dissemination of the *Croniken* emerges, in 1528, the chronicle had already spread from the Low Countries, to Northeastern Europe, and then to Central Europe, and the hallmarks of its provincial origin had been erased.¹³⁰⁸

In Prussia and Livonia, the dissemination of the *Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden* was hardly influenced by the adaptation of the Waiblingen brothers. There are two branches, one Livonian and one Prussian; one written in Low German, the other in High German. Most of the extant manuscripts were either copied around the middle of the sixteenth century, or in the last quarter; that is well after the order had lost Prussia (1525), and uninterrupted by the loss of Livonia (1561). In contrast to the manuscripts that contain the Waiblingen adaptation, or the Middle Dutch manuscripts, there are few indications that the manuscripts were used in the environment of the Teutonic Order.¹³⁰⁹ Rather, most manuscripts, at least when this can be determined, were owned by citizens of the urban centres in the Baltic region or, in the case of some Livonian manuscripts, by the secular nobility. Given that by that time Lutheranism had spread to these cities, many of these owners were of Lutheran faith.¹³¹⁰ In fact, a significant number of manuscripts can be traced to persons associated with the Lutheran university of Wittenberg. One of these manuscripts, manuscript

¹³⁰⁵ See chapter 2.1, "General overview".

¹³⁰⁶ See chapter 3.2, "A shift from the land to its members: choosing a template for the order's history".

¹³⁰⁷ The vast majority of the Waiblingen manuscripts are currently held in archives in Vienna, Ludwigsburg, Stuttgart, and Berlin, all of which locations where documents belonging to the Teutonic Order are known to have ended up after the secularization under Napoleon.

¹³⁰⁸ For the Waiblingen brothers and the evidence presented in this paragraph, see chapter 2.1, "General overview".

¹³⁰⁹ In fact, only the Livonian manuscripts **St** and **Ta** were likely produced in an area where the Teutonic Order was still in power. There is little evidence that both manuscripts were used by brethren of the order though; a user of manuscript **Ta** showed an interest in the privileges of the order, which may, perhaps, imply that he was a brother. Later in the sixteenth century, both manuscripts were owned by the secular nobility in Livonia. In theory, the Prussian manuscripts **Vi**₁ and **Vi**₂, which I have not been able to date clearly, but were written somewhere in the sixteenth century, may have been produced before the secularization of Prussia in 1525.

¹³¹⁰ Regarding the Reformation in Prussia and Livonia: A. Mentzel-Reuters and B. Jähnig eds., *Preußen und Livland im Zeichen der Reformation*. Tagungsberichte der Historischen Kommission für Ost- und Westpreußische Landesforschung 28 (Osnabrück: Fibre 2014).

Pr, has a leather binding stamped with medallions of, amongst other, Melanchthon, Luther, and John Frederick I, the Elector of Saxony.

A further adaptation, made in 1550 by Christoph Jan Weissenfels, survives in thirteen manuscripts. Almost all of these manuscripts can be traced to the city of Königsberg. In Königsberg Paul Pole had used the *Croniken* for his own chronicle in 1530, as did Johannes Freiberg in 1544/5. Both Weissenfels and the Waiblingen brothers also lived and worked in and around the city; evidently, Königsberg was a major centre of early reception and dissemination of the *Croniken*. Yet, there are reasons to believe that the chronicle first circulated in Livonia rather than in Prussia. All of the German manuscripts whose content we have been able to study include a list of cities and castles in the possession of the archbishop of Riga (the largest city of Livonia) – added to the list of Livonian and Prussian commanderies of the Teutonic Order already existing in manuscript **We**₁. Improvements to the list of Prussian commanderies can only be found in some Prussian manuscripts, suggesting such additions were only entered after the Prussian dissemination of the text had become independent of the Livonian.

Due to time constraints, the exact affiliation of all the German manuscripts and adaptations of the *Croniken* cannot be examined in this study, nor have I been able to look into the nature of the adaptations (or continuations?) by the Waiblingen brothers or Christoph Jan Weissenfels and their resemblance to other manuscripts of the *Croniken*. Proper study of how a late medieval chronicle of a Catholic military order, which is critical of the citizens of Prussia because of their role in the Thirteen Years' War (1454-1466), functioned in early modern urban and Lutheran environments, and how its message may have been altered for new audiences, remains a desideratum. The *Croniken* proved to be an attractive text for not only the citizens of Prussian and Livonian towns, but also secular noblemen in Prussia and Livonia perhaps because the Teutonic Order, regardless of its conflicts with the citizenry, formed a part of the history of these regions that could not be ignored. The *Croniken* provided an account of that part of their local history, and the sanctity and eminence of the order, described as having originated in biblical times and acting as a true defender of Christian faith, may have been felt to reflect well onto the people in Prussia and Livonia.

Nevertheless, the text was intended to defend the interests of the Teutonic Order, and the adaptation by the Waiblingen brothers maintained that goal. Indeed, specific historical circumstances that occasioned the three Waiblingen brothers, knight-brethren in Prussia, to adapt a chronicle of the Teutonic Order in 1528. Just three years earlier, Grand Master Albrecht of Brandenburg-Ansbach had converted to Lutheranism, and had reformed the remaining possessions of the Teutonic Order in Prussia into a secular duchy under the Polish crown. The Waiblingen brothers, confronted with this situation, were forced to reconsider their allegiances, but it soon becomes clear that they were no strong supporters of the new duke. Even before the secularization their careers had been held back under Grand Master Albrecht of Brandenburg and we know that Adrian von Waiblingen for a long time refused to pay homage to the new duke. A few years later, the brothers were forced to lay down their habits, and they returned to the duke's service, and kept a low profile. At the same time, however, they corresponded with Walter of Cronberg, the German master and "administrator of the office of grand master", who resided in their home region Franconia. They notified the German master, who was now highest in command in the order, that Prussia had not united behind their new duke and

openly discussed the prospects of a return of the Prussian territory to the Teutonic Order. This was all to little avail and the brothers had no other option than to serve Duke Albrecht of Prussia for the remainder of their lives.¹³¹¹

Against this background the brothers produced their adaptation of the *Croniken*. The adaptation comprises most of the content of the *Croniken* and a continuation until 1525, starting with a few brief chapters bridging the years 1467 and 1511, when Albrecht of Brandenburg took up office as grand master, followed by an increasingly dense account of the Polish-Teutonic War (1519–21) and the final years before the secularization of Prussia. The complete text creates a powerful juxtaposition between the sacred history of the Teutonic Order, especially emphasized by the prologue of the *Croniken*, and the serious misjudgements, in the eyes of the Waiblingen brothers, of Albrecht of Brandenburg at the end of the history. It should be read as an condemnation of his actions, which will have added to the existing attractiveness of the *Croniken*, and which found an eager audience in Germany.¹³¹²

The ways in which political developments touched the members of the military orders were regularly met with historiographical responses in these years. In 1522 the Hospitallers lost Rhodes to the Ottoman sultan Suleiman I, a few decades after the successful defence of the island territory in 1480, which had been so widely publicized throughout Europe. Additionally, the order was faced with internal conflicts between the different *langues*, growing regionalism, and most inauspiciously of all, threats of secularization of the order's possessions in Europe by the French, Portuguese, and English kings, as well as areas in the Holy Roman Empire affected by the Reformation.¹³¹³ To cope with this existential crisis, the order started a propaganda campaign that could easily rival with that of 1480. In the short period between the loss of Rhodes in 1522 and 1530, the Order of Saint John produced over sixty pamphlets and chronicles which stressed the legitimate work of the order and the importance of its search for a new sovereign territory.¹³¹⁴ The order combined this media offensive with diplomacy at the European courts and a demonstration of its military capability in the Mediterranean Sea. This tripartite strategy ultimately proved very successful, as they moved to the island of Malta, granted to them by Emperor Charles V, in 1530.

This shows that the military orders in the sixteenth century resorted to increasingly concerted propaganda campaigns to get their message across. At the same time that message evolved as well. In Guillaume Caoursin's propagandistic account of the Siege of Rhodes in 1480, the siege is still very much presented as part of a religious war.¹³¹⁵ However,

¹³¹¹ Olivier, *L'Ancienne Chronique des Grand-Maîtres*, 1032–1036.

¹³¹² *Ibid.*, 1037.

¹³¹³ Mager, *Krisenerfahrung*.

¹³¹⁴ M. Asche, M. von Hirschheydt and M. Mager, 'Legitimationsdefizite, Bedrohungspotenziale und Bewältigungsstrategien der europäischen Ritterorden in der Krisenzeit der 1520er Jahre – Fallbeispiele und allgemeine Reflexionen', in: R. Czaja and J. Sarnowsky eds., *Die Ritterorden in Umbruchs- und Krisenzeiten*. Ordines Militares. Colloquia Torunensia Historica 16 (2011) 259–302, there 270.

¹³¹⁵ M. Mager, 'Zwischen Propaganda, Kreuzzugsaufruf und Völkerbeschreibung. Die Funktionalisierung des Türkenbildes geistlicher Ritterorden an der Wende zur Neuzeit am Beispiel der Chronik über die Belagerung von Rhodos (1480)', *Saeculum* 60 (2010) 61–77, there 69; see also M. Ciemienga, 'Das Selbstbild des Johanniterordens zwischen Pragmatismus und Propaganda: der Bericht Guillaume Caoursins über die Belagerung von Rhodos 1480', in: J. Sarnowsky, *Vorstellungswelten der mittelalterlichen Überlieferung. Zeitgenössische Wahrnehmungen und ihre moderne Interpretation*. Nova Mediaevalia 11 (Göttingen: V&R Unipress 2012) 191–206, there 195, 200–203.

Caoursin also describes the siege in more worldly terms: as a struggle between two sovereign powers,¹³¹⁶ where much attention is paid to the knightly status of the order.¹³¹⁷ By the 1520s, the wars against the Ottomans were no longer presented primarily as religious wars or crusades, and instead the chivalric prestige of the order and its sovereign authority were emphasized.¹³¹⁸

There were only two environments within the Teutonic Order where the *Croniken van der Duytscher Oirden* certainly found an audience: the Utrecht bailiwick – where the chronicle, because of its bailiwick chronicle and its support of the internal reforms, had an important local function – and the bailiwicks in Southern Germany (mainly Franconia), in the more propagandistic version of the Waiblingen brothers. Without the bailiwick chronicle or the additions by the Waiblingen brothers the *Croniken* reached its largest audience in the cities of Prussia and Livonia – outside the influence of the Teutonic Order.

To conclude, the way in which the *Croniken* was spread, copied, and circulated shows how the different branches of the Teutonic Order at the end of the fifteenth century were interacting with each other. Through the detailed analysis of the text a story emerges of how documents and chronicles were perused from Prussia to Marburg and beyond, in order for an ambitious land commander to create a new history of the order in the Low Countries; a history which itself was subsequently transmitted to Livonia, Prussia and, from there, to the High German-speaking parts of the Holy Roman Empire.

On the one hand the *Croniken* is the product of a highly effective exchange, and, after its completion, became an example of exchange within the order yet again. The chronicle is also, much more than the *Landesgeschichtschreibung* by various authors of the Teutonic Order, from Peter of Dusburg to the author of the *Ältere Hochmeisterchronik*, the first attempt to write a history of all branches of the Teutonic Order combined. It propagates unity and obedience under the wise guidance of the grand master.¹³¹⁹ Yet, on the other hand, its vision of the future is that of an order of celibate noblemen who are entitled to utilize the order's landholdings indefinitely. Such a strategy will not have led to a renewed universal vocation, but only to more particularism, as indeed Drongelen's admittance of new knight-brethren – almost all born, like him, in the County of Holland – shows. This is the tragic paradox of the *Croniken*: rooted within a long-standing regionalist tendency in the Teutonic Order, it uses the order's universal mission to legitimize this tendency only further.

¹³¹⁶ Mager, 'Zwischen Propaganda, Kreuzzugsaufruf und Völkerbeschreibung', 76; Ciemienga, 'Selbstbild des Johanniterordens', 196.

¹³¹⁷ Mager, 'Zwischen Propaganda, Kreuzzugsaufruf und Völkerbeschreibung', 75.

¹³¹⁸ Asche, Von Hirschheydt and Mager, 'Legitimationsdefizite', 270–272; Mager, *Krisenerfahrung*, 172–173.

¹³¹⁹ This emphasis is strikingly consistent with the set of reforms issued at the general chapter of the Teutonic Order in March 1480: L. Dralle, *Der Staat des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen nach dem II. Thorner Frieden. Untersuchungen zur ökonomischen und ständepolitischen Geschichte Altpreußens zwischen 1466 und 1497*. Frankfurter historische Abhandlungen 9 (Wiesbaden: Steiner 1975) 134–135.