

Venerunt fratres predicatores

Notes on Datings of the First Dominican Convent Foundations in Scandinavia

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Barely had the Order of Preachers been established in 1216, before learned Scandinavians living abroad started to join the order. Many of them were sent back home to help founding convents of Friars Preachers in what was to become the order's province of Dacia. This early phase of Dominican history in Scandinavia is relatively well described from a Dominican chronicle, from a number of annals and a handful of extant letters. All this notwithstanding, the exact years in the chronology of events have been a matter of some scholarly discussion. In this article, the author aims to offer an overview of facts, problems and theses, providing new evidence to settle some of the old questions – as well as questioning some of the settled beliefs.

At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 it was decided that the world now had all the religious orders it needed. The very year after, Pope Honorius III gave his approval for the foundation of yet another order, although officially at first only as a congregation within the Augustinian order of canons regular: *Ordo Predicatorum*, the Order of Preachers. The reason for this papal change of mind was a hard felt need for a new institution within the Western Church, a corps of teachers and preachers, partly to take up the theological fight against heretic movements, but even more importantly also to comply with Canons 10 and 11 of the council in 1215 regarding an urgent need to improve theological training of secular priests at the cathedral schools and to endorse much more preaching of the Gospels to people in the dioceses. For this purpose, the Spanish canon regular, Dominic Guzman, had come up with the idea of a new religious order of mobile elite priests especially trained in both theology and communication. They were neither secular priests, canons nor monks, but 'friars', as they were living in religious communities, but not tied to any one particular monastery by a *stabilitas loci*. Furthermore, since Dominic wanted his Friars Preachers to be irreproachable examples of pious behaviour themselves, "practising what they were preaching" so to speak, an essential part of the concept was that they should live like beggars or 'mendicants', without any income-giving real estate, and thus dependent on a continuous generosity from the rest of society. The Order of Preachers founded its first convents in university cities like Paris and Bologna. Here, a lot of students and

teachers soon became attracted to the ideas of the new order, and also several Scandinavians sent down to the Continent to study theology, arts or canon law decided for a change of career in favour of joining the order. A Dominican chronicle *Historia ordinis predicatorum in Dacia* from around 1260 names four of these first Scandinavian Friars Preachers, who joined the order while abroad even before anyone had heard of it back home: They were called Rano, Simon, Nicolaus and Salomon.¹

Fr. Rano and the formation of the province of Dacia

Fr. Rano had been a teacher of arts and dean at the cathedral chapter of Roskilde before going to Paris, where he met Dominic himself and decided to become a friar. According to the chronicle, Rano had been elected bishop in Roskilde and it was on his way to the Curia for his confirmation that he made a decisive stop in Paris. Whereas a now lost tombstone found at the priory site in Roskilde confirms that Rano was “*quondam decanus Roschildensis*”, no other source mentions that he was ever elected bishop. Henrik Schück suggested that Dean Rano may have been acting bishop in Roskilde during an episcopal vacancy from 1214 to 1216,² while Per Bjørn Halvorsen found it more plausible that he could have been a rival candidate to Niels Stigsen for the episcopal election in 1225.³ If Fr. Rano did indeed meet with Dominic in Paris, this is most likely to have occurred in 1219, but if Halvorsen is right, he probably was not in Paris until 1225–26, by which time Dominic had been dead for years. Also Simon Tugwell believes that it was Dominic’s successor, Master General Jordan, who received Rano in the Order of Preachers. Fr. Jordan was in Paris during Christmas 1225 and Easter 1226.⁴ Apparently in support of Tugwell’s and Halvorsen’s date is a subsequent statement in the chronicle that within the first year of Rano’s membership of the order, he became the first provincial leader, ‘prior provincial’, of its Scandinavian province, the ‘province of Dacia’. Traditionally it is believed that the Scandinavian province was officially established at the order’s general chapter in 1228,⁵ but according to a recent study by Simon Tugwell this is a misunderstanding of the actual meaning of the decision, which does not formally establish any new provinces,

¹ *Historia ordinis predicatorum in Dacia (Historia)*, traditionally known under the post-medieval and somewhat misleading title *Historia Ordinis Praedicatorum seu Dominicanorum in Dania 1216–1246*. For its various publications and translations, see the bibliography.

² Schück 1916: 36.

³ Halvorsen 2002: 250–252.

⁴ Tugwell 2000: 54.

⁵ *Monumenta Ordinis Praedicatorum Historica (MOPH)* vol. III, 3.

but only expands the privileges of the provinces in question (Polonia, Dacia, Grecia and Terra sancte).⁶ It is Tugwell's feeling that the early provinces sort of established themselves, whenever a new convent had been founded within a distinct linguistic region, such as Scandinavia or the church province of Dacia. In that case, as we shall see, Fr. Rano could indeed have been appointed prior provincial as soon as 1220 or 1221–22. It was, however, Tugwell's own suggestion that it could have been at the general chapter in 1226 that Rano was pronounced prior provincial of Dacia by either Jordan or the chapter.⁷ It is unknown as to when Fr. Rano returned to Scandinavia as provincial, but he died in office in 1238.⁸ His past at Roskilde cathedral and the fact that he chose to be buried at the priory in Roskilde led Jarl Gallén to the fair assumption that the foundation of a Dominican convent in Roskilde in the early 1230s probably not least was due to Rano's personal effort.⁹

The first convent foundation in Sigtuna

Roskilde was, however, not the first Scandinavian town to house a convent of Friars Preachers. It was preceded by at least two and perhaps four other convents. While the precise year of Fr. Rano's entry in the order is not explicitly stated, the chronicle does provide a year and even an exact day for the first two Scandinavian entries, which allegedly took place in Bologna on the 15 August 1219: *Anno Domini MCCXIX in festo assumptionis beate virginis assumpti sunt Bononie ad ordinem duo clerici, frater Simon de Suecia, et frater Nicolaus Lundensis de Dacia*.¹⁰ We are not told what kind of clergy Simon of Sweden and Nicolaus Lundensis of Denmark were, but it is not at all unlikely that they, just like Fr. Rano, came from the secular church, perhaps aspiring to become canons, which would certainly comply with a study of canon law at the Bolognese university. In the following year, 1220, a Swedish Provost Gaufred from the church in Sigtuna came to Paris, where he met with Dominic and apparently got so excited by Dominic's new order that he asked the orderly leader to provide him with friars that could help promoting its goals of better theological teaching and

⁶ Tugwell 2000: 17–18 and 54.

⁷ Tugwell 2000: 54.

⁸ E.g. *Annales Skeningenses* (in *Scriptores Rerum Suecicarum* (SRS) vol. III, 3–4) and *Priores provinciales in provincia Dacie* (e.g. in Halvorsen 2002, 248).

⁹ Gallén 1946: 26.

¹⁰ "In the year of Our Lord 1219 on the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, two clerks, Fr. Simon of Sweden and Fr. Niels of Lund in Denmark, were admitted in the Order in Bologna." *Historia*.

preaching in the Uppsala archdiocese. Dominic brought Gaufred's request to the general chapter meeting in Bologna that same year, where it was introduced to the two new Scandinavian brethren. It was a deliberate policy of the Order of Preachers that the order should be introduced in the countries of Europe by native-speaking friars, not least after an almost fatal incident by the Franciscan order, who had sent Italian friars to Germany only capable of saying one word in German: *Ja!* As long as people only asked the friars if they wanted food and shelter, "Ja" constituted an adequate vocabulary, but when one suspicious magistrate asked if they were heretics coming from Lombardy, the same answer almost got them burned at the stake. In a similar fatal linguistic misunderstanding, the first Italian Franciscans coming to France gladly announced that they were Albigenians.¹¹ The Dominican leaders would not make the same mistake and therefore made sure of sending German-speaking friars to Germany, English friars to England, Hungarians to Hungary, Poles to Poland – and Scandinavians to Scandinavia. And thus, Fr. Simon de Suecia and Fr. Nicolaus Lundensis seemed like the perfect answer to Gaufred's prayers. The two friars accompanied the provost back home to Sweden, where they began preparations for the first Scandinavian convent in Sigtuna. In January 1221, a papal letter of indulgence was issued in favour of the construction of a monastery in Sigtuna,¹² usually believed to be the Dominican priory,¹³ but the whole project came to a sudden and premature end, when the archbishop in Uppsala, Olof Basatömir, decided against it. The reason for the archbishop's dislike of the Friars Preachers is not clear, but probably it was mainly in order to secure the young Swedish church province from influence of Danish 'primacy' and the Gregorian ideas of the Curia, where Olof may have seen the Dominican friars as too closely related to both Lund and Rome. However that may be, nothing came of Dominican plans in the archdiocese of Uppsala until a convent was indeed founded in Sigtuna in 1237 – three years after the death of Olof. In the meantime, Fr. Simon and Fr. Nicolaus were at first given a temporary place to stay in nearby Sko by nobleman Knut Holmgersson Långe, who later became Swedish king. Sko eventually became the residence of a Cistercian nunnery, but it was not exactly a suitable place for the Dominican project. Fortunately for the two friars, a better opportunity soon showed itself elsewhere. Before leaving the failed foundation in Sigtuna, a couple of questions can be asked about the datings connected to it in the chronicle. According

¹¹ Jordan of Giano: *Chronica fratris* (cf. Freed 1977, 26; and Tugwell 1998, 80).

¹² *Diplomatarium Suecanum* (DS) vol. 1, no. 205.

¹³ E.g. Gallén 1946: 5–6. Both Vladimir Koudelka and Simon Tugwell do, however, argue against such an identification. Koudelka in MOPH vol. XXV no. 138; Tugwell 1996: 20.

to *Historia*, Provost Gaufred came to Paris in 1220 on his way to Rome to collect the pallium for the newly appointed Archbishop Olof. However, Olof did not receive papal approval until January 1224, and it is disputed whether his predecessor Valerius was still alive in the autumn of 1220. According to several annals, he died on 7 April 1219,¹⁴ but he is also listed as one of the witnesses to a royal donation in 1220.¹⁵ Jarl Gallén therefore suggested an error in the annals and an actual time of death for Valerius on 7 April 1223,¹⁶ whereas Knut B. Westman and Herman Schück believed that the royal letter of 1220 referred to an occasion that took place in 1219.¹⁷ If Gallén is right, and if the Sigtuna provost was indeed in Paris and Rome in early 1220 (the general chapter in Bologna was held during Pentecost), then the occasion must have been something else – possibly a matter related to the royal Swedish court. No matter what is the case of Archbishop Valerius' actual time of death, we do not know when Olof Basatömir was elected in his place, but it must have taken place between April 1219 and January 1224. An election after 1220 fits well with the actual implementation of an initial foundation phase in Sigtuna, as suggested by the papal letter of January 1221, until the change of archbishop also led to a decisive change of climate for the friars.

The convent foundation in Lund

The fourth and final of the first Scandinavian Dominicans on which this article focuses, was called Salomon. According to the chronicle, he was born in Århus on the Danish peninsula of Jylland, and he joined the Order of Preachers in Verona during the Easter of 1220. It is not indicated in any way what background Salomon had or what he was doing in Verona. There was no university in medieval Verona, only some professors paid by the magistrate to teach arts and philosophy,¹⁸ but the city was quite a mercantile centre, thus, Salomon may have been there in some lay business. If so, God had other plans with him. First he went with another friar to Germany, but he was back in northern Italy in 1221, where he took part in the general chapter held in Bologna. Here Fr. Salomon met with Dominic, who wanted him to go back home to his native country to introduce the Order of Preachers there. A statement in the

¹⁴ E.g. *Annales Dano-Sueciani* (in *Scriptores Rerum Danicarum* (SRD) vol. II, 167; SRS vol. I no. 47; and *Annales Danici* (AD), 131).

¹⁵ DS no. 185.

¹⁶ Gallén 1945. Supported by Halvorsen 1997.

¹⁷ Westman 1915: 265; Schück 2005, 103 note 32.

¹⁸ Gallén 1946: 6.

chronicle that Salomon was given letters by the pope and Dominic himself to present to the Danish king and archbishop is actually confirmed by a preserved letter of 6 May 1221 from Honorius III to King Valdemar II of Denmark, in which the pope asks the king to welcome the Friars Preachers in his kingdom because of all their good deeds.¹⁹ Fr. Salomon complied with his master's command, and after a very troublesome journey (via Nidaros and Oslo), he finally reached Copenhagen, where he was warmly welcomed by Archbishop Anders Sunesen. According to the chronicle, the archbishop read the letters and then greeted the friar with these words: "May it so happen that all churches within our jurisdiction could receive this order."²⁰ With "all his churches" he probably meant each of the dioceses in the church province of Lund, i.e. Denmark, or perhaps even all of Scandinavia. Anders Sunesen himself paved the way for fulfilling his own wish by giving the Order of Preachers a plot in Lund for construction of a priory near the cathedral. It is to this event that the single most disputed word in the entire chronicle is connected. The chronicle states:

Finally, in the following year around Pentecost by the help of God and by suggestion from the said cardinal, the archbishop gave the friars a site in Lund (or: gave the friars in Lund a site) in the year of Our Lord 1221 and constructed buildings suitable for the friars.²¹

The problem is that the year mentioned earlier was that of Salomon's departure from Bologna, explicitly stated to 1221, which also fits with a general decision on the chapter this particular year to send out friars to the fringes of Europe. So, the chronicle apparently contradicts itself: Fr. Salomon was sent to Denmark after the general chapter in 1221, a meeting which took place at Pentecost, and then at "the following year around Pentecost" the Order was given a site, something also to have taken place in *anno Domini 1221*. The most logical explanation would be that the chronicle has got the latter year wrong, and that it should be saying **1222**. The chronicle is only preserved in two post-medieval transcripts by Hans Svanning (†1584) and Jacob Langebek (†1775), and since they both explicitly dates "the following year" to 1221, an eventual error has to go back to an earlier common source, either the

¹⁹ *Diplomatarium Danicum* (DD) 1. ser. vol. V no. 194.

²⁰ "Bene venisti, utinam in omni ecclesia que est de cura nostra haberemus unum de tali ordine." *Historia*.

²¹ "Tandem sequenti anno circa pentecosten, favente Dei gratia et dicto cardinali suggerente, dominus archiepiscopus dedit fratribus Lundis locum anno Domini 1221 et edificia fratribus apta construxit." *Historia*.

original manuscript or a known, but now lost transcript of the fourteenth century. In 1918, the second publisher of the chronicle, M.Cl. Gertz, concluded that such an error was the case, so he simply changed the year to 1222 in his reconstructed version based on both the preserved transcripts, a solution subsequently and silently repeated by Jarl Gallén in his use of the text. Simon Tugwell has pointed to the fact that the mentioning of the year 1221 in the end of the sentence seems unnecessary and inserted, which would point to an error made by the transcriber. Nevertheless, Tugwell himself chose to maintain the dating of 1221 in his reconstructed version of the chronicle published in 1996–2000. Certainly, the error-thesis is not without its own problems, since another source, the *Annales Ripensis*, just like the chronicle has the year 1221: 1221. *Fratres predicatores Lundis locum receperunt ab Andrea archiepiscopo.*²² This is repeated in a later annal, which does, however, probably have its information from the former.²³ The choice of wording in *Annales Ripensis*, which is a bit unusual for references to priory foundations, could furthermore indicate that the reference here is based on that in the *Historia*. Chances even are that the initial mistake on the dating is actually made by the chronicler of *Annales Ripensis*, who could have misread the original version of the *Historia* (the preceding numerical year in the chronicle before the reference to the foundation is indeed 1221), and the transcriber of the chronicle in the early fourteenth century could have felt it necessary to add the year 1221 after seeing this stated in the annal. This is, however, all speculation, it only goes to show that the dating in the annals does not settle the question. The description of the event in a third annal made by the Franciscan chronicler Fr. Petrus Olavi in the 1530s shows that he himself had become uncertain of the exact year, probably from reading the *Historia*: *Hic Andreas ... etiam dedit fratribus predicatoribus Lundis curiam suam cum capella circa annos Domini 1221.*²⁴ It is impossible to say if Fr. Petrus had an additional source for the “farm with a chapel” or if he deduced that part himself, but he generally seems to have had access to sources on early Dominican history in Denmark otherwise now lost.

The key figure to finding the correct year for the Dominican convent foundation in Lund has until now seemed to be the chronicle’s reference to “the said cardinal”, Gregorius de Crescentio, who came to Denmark as papal legate in the summer of

²² *Annales Ripenses* (in SRD vol. II, 172; and AD, 152).

²³ *Annales 1101–1313* (in SRD vol. IV, 24; and AD, 201).

²⁴ “This Anders ... also gave the Friars Preachers in Lund his farm with a chapel around the year 1221.” *Annales Petri Olavi* (in AD, 206).

1222. During his stay, he travelled around Denmark and dealt with various ecclesiastical matters, mainly the classic Scandinavian issue of secular priests' problems with keeping the celibacy. It was probably on this tour that the cardinal according to the chronicle made good use of Fr. Salomon's language skills: *At this time Master Gregorius de Crescentia was in Denmark as cardinal legate. He took Fr. Salomon on as assistant because he was both educated and eloquent, and he used him as interpreter when he was preaching.*²⁵ The alleged role of Gregorius led Jarl Gallén to the conclusion that neither of the years 1221 or 1222 could be correct, since the cardinal did not arrive in Denmark until the late summer of 1222, too late to be involved in any foundation around Pentecost that same year. The Lund foundation therefore, according to Gallén, should rather be dated to 1223!²⁶ Per Bjørn Halvorsen later agreed with the problem of timing, but solved it by refusing that Gregorius had played any real part in the Dominican convent foundation at all – he hardly needed to make any such suggestions to Anders Sunesen, who seemed only to happy to help the Friars Preachers to begin with. Moreover, the chronicle's wording – using 'Friars Preachers' in plural, not just Fr. Salomon; and *locum* ('place'), not *situm* ('plot'), *domus* ('house') or *curia* ('farm', 'hall' or 'manor house') – suggested to Halvorsen that the entry on 1221 only referred to a general permission for the Order of Preachers to settle in Lund.²⁷ According to G.R. Galbraith, though, *locum* was the usual term used in English sources for Dominican houses that had not yet reached the formal status of convent.²⁸

It is, however, my belief that Cardinal Gregorius *was* involved with the founding donation and that it *did* take place around Pentecost 1222. I base this claim on a written record, which to my knowledge has not been included in the discussion so far – justly enough, since it neither mentions Gregorius de Crescentia nor the Friars Preachers. On 16 June 1222, Archbishop Anders Sunesen made an exchange of real property with the canons of the cathedral chapter, a transaction which took place at the archbishop's mansion in Glostorp, just south of Malmö, and according to a subsequent letter this occasion was witnessed and confirmed by no other than Cardinal Gregorius.²⁹ So, apparently the papal legate *was* present in Skåne at the

²⁵ "Illis temporibus erat in Dacia legatus cardinalis dominus Gregorius de Crescentia. Qui fratrem Salomonem, quia litteratus erat et facundus, sibi associans ipsum in predicationibus suis interpretem habuit." *Historia*.

²⁶ Gallén 1946: 9–11.

²⁷ Halvorsen 1997.

²⁸ Galbraith 1925: 51–52.

²⁹ DD 1. ser. vol. V nos. 203–204. None of the actual diploma are extant in the original versions, but preserved through transcripts in *Lundebogen* from 1494.



Fig. 1. Reconstructed city map of late medieval Lund, showing urban area with streets, churches, monasteries and other major buildings. Based on maps and information in Blomqvist 1951: 151 and 192; Blomqvist 1978: 10; and Andrén 1980, map 16. Reproduced from Jakobsen 2008, appendix 4.

beginning of summer 1222, and could for all we know have been so even at the time around Pentecost (22 May). A former claim by Knut B. Westman that Gregorius still was in Bohemia by 2 July 1222, which led Gallén to move the foundation to 1223, has subsequently shown to be based on a printing error in the Bohemian diplomatarium for what should have been 2 July 1221!³⁰ The document of 16 June becomes even more interesting, when looking at the exchanged real property in question. The canons secular received all the landed estate belonging to the Major Church of St. Mary in Lund in exchange for an urban farm with gardens and other belongings, which used to belong to a Magister Johannes, obviously a deceased member of the chapter. The farm is not mentioned in the episcopal records again, and with the timing (around Pentecost) and the presence of Cardinal Gregorius de Crescento, I think it all matches up perfectly with the tale of the chronicle. Not only does this letter of property exchange strongly support the chronicle's claim that the foundation of the Dominican convent in Lund took place around Pentecost 1222, it even seems to identify a very likely candidate for the site that was given to the Order by Anders Sunesen: The farm with gardens that was formerly owned by the canon Magister Johannes. It is not said where this farm was located, but it is likely to have been situated close to the cathedral area, exactly where the Dominican priory subsequently was built, next door to the cathedral chapter (on the northern side of today's Kiliansgatan, see map in Fig. 1).

The happy news that the Order of Preachers had received a priory site in Lund soon got about. The chronicle continues: *When this was heard by the friars, who had been sent to Sweden, they came to Fr. Salomon in Lund, and so did quite many others, who had joined the Order in Paris and Bologna, and they chose Fr. Simon to be their prior.*³¹ Apparently, several more Scandinavians in the meantime had chosen to enter the Order of Preachers, and now they too were directed back to Dacia to help establishing the first permanent convent in the North. What hereafter became of the three pioneering friars – Fr. Salomon of Århus, Fr. Simon de Suecia and Fr. Nicolaus Lundensis – is a bit in the blur. Or as more bluntly put by Simon Tugwell in regard of Fr. Salomon: *He may have discovered America or gone to the moon, for all we know to the contrary.*³² No Dominican Fr. Salomon is ever mentioned again in the extant written sources from Scandinavia. I have recently suggested a possible connection to

³⁰ Westman 1915: 269 and 280 note 2; DD 1. ser. vol. V no. 203, commentary.

³¹ *Hoc audito fratres qui missi fuerant in Sueciam venerunt Lundis ad fratrem Salomonem et alii quamplures qui recepti fuerant Parisius et Bononie, et fratrem Simonem sibi priorem constituunt. Historia.*

³² Tugwell 2000: 53.

the Chapel of St. Salomon on the northernmost tip of the island Bornholm, a chapel known back from the early fourteenth century, which may have been used by travelling Friars Preachers from the convent in Lund as place for pastoral services directed at people visiting the coastal herring markets on the Baltic island.³³ Fr. Nicolaus Lundensis may be identical to a *frater Nicolaus, sacerdos et professus de ordine fratrum predicatorum Lundis*, whom according to the necrology of Lund chapter died on 18 April; the year is not stated, but the entry is made in a section of the necrology dated to the period 1220–40.³⁴ Nothing more is heard of Fr. Simon, unless he is identical to the high-ranking Dominican Fr. Simon Preacher (*broðir Simun predicari*), who held an entrusted position with King Håkon Håkonsson of Norway in the 1250–60s. According to *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, Simon Preacher was used as royal messenger to Denmark and Spain in the late 1250s, and he accompanied King Håkon on a journey in 1263 to the Scottish Isles, where he died from illness and was buried in the Cistercian Saddell Abbey on Kintyre.³⁵ In all three cases, the suggested attempts of identification here with later namesakes are mere speculation.

Clarifying notes on the subsequent convent foundations in Dacia until 1234

After the first Scandinavian convent of Friars Preachers had been established in Lund by Fr. Salomon in 1222 and joined by Fr. Simon and Nicolaus around 1223–24, at least two more Dominican convents were founded in Scandinavia in the following decade. Since numerous more convent foundations have been attributed to this period in modern scholarly literature, this final part of the article will add a few clarifying notes on these as well.

THE FIRST CONVENT FOUNDATION IN TALLINN

The first one to be commented on was actually situated outside of Scandinavia, namely in Tallinn, Estonia, but until 1517 this was part of the province of Dacia. According to the *Historia*, this convent was founded twice, first time on request by King Valdemar II of Denmark after having made Estonia a Danish duchy. Allegedly,

³³ Jakobsen 2009.

³⁴ *Necrologium Lundensis* (in SRD vol. III, 507; and *Liber daticus Lundensis*, 91). Connection first suggested by Gallén 1946: 262.

³⁵ *Hákonar saga hákonarsonar* ch. 286, 290 and 320 (e.g. in *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* (ed. M. Mundt): 165, 172 and 196).

friars were sent to Tallinn in 1229, where they built a priory with a church next to the castle. This happened on advice from yet another papal legate, this time William de Modena, who at that time worked in Denmark and Sweden. “But since the Estonians are rough and unlearned in Christianity”, they soon revolted against the clergy, and whereas the first bishop in Tallinn and his clerks were killed, the Friars Preachers were forced to leave the city. In 1246, a second and more successful attempt was made to found a convent of Friars Preachers in Tallinn, also this time with brethren from Dacia. Whereas the second and permanent Dominican priory was founded by the eastern city gate, at the opposite side of town of the castle, archaeological remnants of the first priory church have indeed been found under the chancel of the present cathedral up by the castle, thus supporting the actual existence of such a priory claimed by the chronicle. The datings of its history are, however, more disputed. King Valdemar II of Denmark had defeated an army of Estonian pagans at Tallinn (Reval) in 1219, and a Danish fortress *Daneborg* was erected as the central stronghold for Danish supremacy in north-western Estonia. Soon, rivalry between Danes and the militant order of the German Sword Brothers broke out and threatened the entire Christianization of Balticum. For this reason, Cardinal William of Modena was sent to the North in 1225–27 and 1228–30 as papal legate in order to reconcile the two Christian parties. Allegedly, William had been a personal friend of Dominic, and at both legation journeys he seems to have advocated the use of Dominican friars in the Baltic mission. In 1227, the Sword Brothers gained entry to Tallinn and started the construction of a small fortress close to Daneborg; this is probably the *castrum minus* next to which that the friars built their first priory. The relation between the Danes and the Sword Brothers continued to worsen, and when a new papal legate, Balduin, decided to solve the dispute by placing the control of Tallinn directly under the pope, the Sword Brothers rioted. In 1233, they drove out the last Danes and their suspected allies of the Friars Preachers. The chronicle may, therefore, not be completely true, when it blames the pagan Estonians for the expulsion of the first Dominican convent.³⁶ It should be noted, though, that this tradition does not stand undisputed. Jarl Gallén found that the chronicle’s dating of the events is erroneous, and that the friars were expelled already in 1227, when the Sword Brothers took power in Tallinn.³⁷ Simon Tugwell, on the other hand, has suggested that the year of the first convent foundation was indeed 1239! William of Modena was back in the Baltic area in 1234–43, where he – with Dominican assistance – managed to bring about a settlement in

³⁶ Walther–Wittenheim 1938: 8–11.

³⁷ Gallén 1946: 46–47.

1238, which brought the Danes back to Tallinn. If this is the case, then the chronicle might be right in blaming the pagans, as the friars then could have been temporarily expelled during a pagan uprising in 1240.³⁸

The convent foundation in Ribe and the apocryphical convents in Jylland

The second (permanent) Scandinavian convent of Friars Preachers was established in Ribe. According to the already mentioned and surprisingly well-informed Franciscan chronicler of the sixteenth-century, Fr. Petrus Olavi, this foundation took place in 1228: “Et missus est conventus fratrum predicatorum de domo Lundensi ad domum Ripensem scilicet anno Domini 1228.”³⁹ The explicit mentioning that the friars of the new convent all came from Lund is quite unusual and supports that this was indeed the second convent of the order established in Scandinavia. In fact, this second convent may have promoted the enlarged provincial rights of Dacia given at the general chapter of that same year.

Even in recent publications one may find claims that the convent in Ribe along with several other Dominican convents in western Denmark was founded in 1227. Whereas this dating is obviously not completely off the road in the case of Ribe, no other evidence supports such early claims for the convents in Viborg, Århus, Vejle, Haderslev and Odense – in the cases of Vejle and Haderslev (founded around 1325 and 1251 respectively) the are demonstrably untrue. The source quoted for the year 1227 is the eighteenth-century chronicler Erich Pontoppidan and his Danish church history, *Annales ecclesiae Danicae*, from the 1740s: “In diesem Jahr und nächst folgenden Jahren breiteten sich die Dominicaner-Mönche hie zu Lande weit aus und baueten zu Wiborg, Aarhuus, Wedel, Ripen, Tondern, Husum, Flensburg, Hattersleben, Odense, Wisbye und andertwerts ihre Klöster ...”⁴⁰ Thus, Pontoppidan actually dated the foundations more liberally than what he is usually cited for, “In this year (i.e. 1227) and the following years”. If anything, the list shows that Pontoppidan did not know the exact years of foundation for any of these convents, this in contrast to various other Dominican foundations listed elsewhere in the chronicle – albeit then usually dated incorrectly, where this can be checked. The sequence of the named convents seems to be strictly geographical (from northern to southern Jylland and then eastwards to Fyn and Gotland), and thus not even indicating any chronological order. From where Pontoppidan quoted the year 1227 is unknown; no Dominican

³⁸ Tugwell 1998: 112–116.

³⁹ “And a convent of Friars Preachers was sent from the house in Lund to the house in Ribe, namely in the year 1228.” *Annales Petri Olavi* (in SRD vol. I, 183; and AD, 206).

⁴⁰ Pontoppidan 1741–47 vol. I: 642.

convent foundation in Dacia is known from this year, with Ribe (1228) being the closest. To our knowledge, no Dominican convent has ever existed in Flensburg, Husum or Tønder, although Pontoppidan's reference to them has caused some historical confusion later on. He is most likely to have mistaken them with Franciscan convents, perhaps from misreading Cypræus, a source that we know he made use of. Johannes Adolphus Cypræus in 1634 had published a chronicle on the history of Slesvig diocese, which was based on the unpublished works of his father and uncle, Paulus and Hieronymus Cypræus. In this, Dominican and Franciscan convent foundations are listed in Tønder, Ribe, Haderslev, Husum and Kiel, but in an all mixed-up way, that makes Pontoppidan's potential misreading understandable.⁴¹

The convent foundation in Visby

But, hopefully having put the apocryphical Dominican convents in Tønder, Husum and Flensburg to rest for good, along with the claimed datings to 1227 of all the remaining west Danish foundations, one convent foundation mentioned in Pontoppidan's list is a little more troublesome: Visby on Gotland. In this case, Pontoppidan's claim actually does fit with other evidence, although that too is problematical. On 17 September 1230, Pope Gregory IX authorized Friars Preachers in the church provinces of Bremen and Magdeburg to preach the Cross against the Prussians in their own provinces, as well as in Poland, Pomerania, Moravia, Suravia, Gotland and Holstein, a crusade to be fought under the leadership of the Teutonic Order.⁴² Not only is this papal bull the earliest surviving commission to the Order of Preachers for preaching the Cross, it has also been taken as evidence for a then existing Dominican convent in Visby,⁴³ a convent otherwise not heard of until 1243. A problem with such an interpretation is, however, that the wording of the bull leaves it unclear whether it is directed to Friars Preachers in the two named German church provinces only, who are then licensed (*constitutos*) to preach in the remaining districts, or if the 'constituted friars' are permanently based in e.g. Gotland (Visby) and Holstein (Lübeck); the expert on crusade preaching and related papal bulls, Christoph Maier, seems to believe the former.⁴⁴ Thus, the bull may only prove the presence in Visby of itinerant Friars Preachers travelling from Germany along with German merchants and crusaders, using Visby as a stop on the way to Prussia and Livonia. Against the existence of a permanent Dominican convent in Visby at this early

⁴¹ Cypræus 1634: 240.

⁴² *Preussisches Urkundenbuch* vol. I:1 no. 81.

⁴³ E.g. Gallén 1946: 47–50.

⁴⁴ Maier 1994: 49.

time speaks the fact that Pope Gregory IX in the years around 1230 on several occasions issued bulls directed to the ecclesiastical authorities in the diocese of Linköping on matters concerning Gotland and Finland, and in these bulls the local authorities on Gotland are represented only by the secular provost in Visby and the Cistercian abbot of Roma Abbey, whereas no Dominican representatives are ever mentioned – an inclusion which was otherwise to be expected.⁴⁵

The convent foundation in Roskilde

My final example to be presented here is the Dominican convent foundation in Roskilde. This is a case of multiple dating possibilities suggested by different sources. To start with Erich Pontoppidan, for this convent he could state a precise year of foundation, namely 1233, in which the Friars Preachers “settled in Roskilde and built a magnificent monastery”.⁴⁶ As with most other precisely stated years of Dominican convent foundations in this eighteenth-century chronicle it is unknown from where Pontoppidan had his datings, but in all cases they differ from preserved medieval sources. According to the *Annales Visbyenses*, an annal compiled by Franciscan friars in Visby until the late thirteenth century, their Dominican colleagues came to Roskilde in 1231: *1231. Predicatores venerunt Roskildis*.⁴⁷ A similar entry is made in the chronicle by Petrus Olavi for the year 1231, but in addition to this he states for the year 1234: *Missus est conventus fratrum Predicatorum Roskildis*.⁴⁸ What is a present-day historian longing for accurate foundation-datings to make out of this? There seem to be two alternative choices of explanation. The first one is that Petrus Olavi himself had access to two different datings, one from the annals of his fellow Franciscan friars in Visby, which the use of exact same wording for the year 1231 would indicate, and another one now lost, probably from some local Dominican material, into which the Roskilde-based Friar Minor had insight. If so, the dating to 1234 probably should be given prevalence due to its expected Dominican origin. But another possibility is that both datings are correct in the sense that they are representing the different stages of a mendicant convent foundation, as described by G.R. Galbraith.⁴⁹ In 1231, a small group of selected Friars Preachers may have come

⁴⁵ E.g. DS nos. 245, 246, 250, 253, and 256.

⁴⁶ “Anno 1233. Liessen sich die Dominicaner, oder Prediger–Mönche, zu Roeschild nieder, und baueten ein herrlich Kloster.” Pontoppidan 1741–47: 648.

⁴⁷ “1231. Preachers came to Roskilde”. *Annales Visbyenses* (in SRD vol. I, 251; and AD, 137).

⁴⁸ “1234. A convent of Friars Preachers was sent to Roskilde.” *Annales Petri Olavi* (in SRD vol. I, 184; and AD, 206).

⁴⁹ Galbraith 1925: 51.

to Roskilde, as pioneers being sent out to prepare the foundation of an actual convent, which then was established three years later. Apart from a positive attitude from the Roskilde bishop and the earlier suggested endorsing efforts of Prior Provincial Rano, the planned project in Roskilde was probably promoted by a sad incident taking place far away in 1232, because for this year Petrus Olavi states that Johannes Ebbesen, formerly marshal of King Valdemar II, died in the Holy Land, in Acre, and that he had donated 40 marks silver to the Friars Preachers in Roskilde for the construction of a church and priory.⁵⁰ According to crusade historian Kurt Villads Jensen, Marshal Johannes, who was of the powerful Hvide family, had apparently joined a contingent of mainly German, English and Scandinavian crusaders, who sailed out of Palermo in the summer of 1227.⁵¹ If so, his will, and thus the plans of establishing a Dominican convent in Roskilde, may go back to 1226–27. The construction of a Dominican church in Roskilde, which Johannes Ebbesen had helped funding, was finished in 1254, at least far enough to initiate it and dedicate it to St. Catherine, something which once again is handed down to us by Fr. Petrus Olavi.⁵² Thus, as this Franciscan chronicler of the 1530s appears very well-informed on matters concerning the neighbouring Dominican convent in Roskilde, we should probably feel quite hesitant to dismiss any of his datings on its initial history – even when they seem to contradict themselves internally. Which may also lead to a suitable conclusive consideration in regard of historians' urge to identify exact datings on monastic foundations: Often the establishing process of such convents went on through several years, of which several could be pointed out as a legitimate 'year of foundation'.

Bibliography

All the Dominican sources referred to in the text are, in addition to the references found in the footnotes, published online in my *Diplomatarium OP Dacie* (www.jggj.dk/DiplOPdacie.htm) and *Scriptores ordinis predicatorum de provincia Dacie* (www.jggj.dk/HOPD.htm).

⁵⁰ *Annales Petri Olavi* (in SRD vol. I, 183. For some reason, this part of the chronicle is not included in AD). In Danish literature mentioning the donation, the amount is sometimes erroneously enumerated to 400 marks silver.

⁵¹ Jensen 2005: 166–167.

⁵² *Annales Petri Olavi* (in SRD vol. I, 185; and AD, 208).

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