

On the Baltic Crusade and the first Friars Preachers in Visby

How an imprecise wording and a mixed transcript may have produced a premature convent foundation

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A Dominican convent of Friars Preachers was established in Visby on Gotland by 1230. This is a rather firmly established tradition among scholarship, which was not least founded by the great historian of Dominicans in Scandinavia, Jarl Gallén, who in the still-standing major work on the topic from 1946 also explained the background for this conclusion:

As we have shown above, the convent of Visby is one of the oldest of the province of Dacia, founded around 1228-1230 [...]. The first reference to Friars Preachers on Gotland is made in a papal bull. It was namely on 13 September 1230 that Gregory IX addressed the Dominicans established in the church provinces of Magdeburg and Bremen, as in Poland, Pomerania, Moravia, Suravia, Holstein and Gotland, enjoining them to preach the crusade against the infidel Prussians. This bull was issued on request from the Teutonic Order, established in Prussia in 1228.¹

Subsequent scholars have repeated Gallén's assumption without much discussion, although Nils Blomkvist has wondered whether this early presence of Friars Preachers in Visby initially may have been administered within the Dominican Order by the German province of Teutonia.² By the time of the first explicit reference to a Dominican prior and convent in Visby in 1243, it was obviously a part of the Order's Scandinavian province of Dacia.³ The key question of the present article is, however, whether the sources actually do support the existence of such a Dominican convent in Visby before 1243? Christoph Maier was the first recent scholar to question the issue, although only in an indirect form, as he noted that the bull of Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) was issued for Friars Preachers in the church provinces of Magdeburg and Bremen only, whereas the preaching also was to take place in the subsequently listed districts – including Gotland.⁴ Which is, of course, not the same as to say that convents necessarily existed in all these districts by that time. In an article on questionable datings of the early Dominican convent foundations in Scandinavia, I have pointed to

¹ "Comme nous l'avons montré plus haut, le couvent de Visby est un des plus anciens de la province Dacie, fondé vers 1228-1230 [...]. La première mention des Frères Prêcheurs de Gotland est faite dans une bulle papale. C'est ainsi que le 13 septembre 1230, Grégoire IX s'adressait aux Dominicains établis dans les provinces ecclésiastique de Magdebourg et de Brême, ainsi qu'en en Pologne, Poméranie, Moravie, Suranie, Holstein et Gotland, en les exhortant à prêcher la croisade contre les Prussiens infidèles. Cette bulle fut expédiée sur la demande de l'Ordre Teutonique établi en Prusse dès 1228." Gallén 1946, 47-49.

² Pernler 1977, 94-95; Yrwing 1978, 201; Andrén 2011, 110; Blomkvist 2011, 8. An older tradition dated the Dominican convent foundation in Visby to around 1240. Leinberg 1895, 3; Wedel-Jarlsberg 1899, 7.

³ DS vol. I no. 307 / LEKUB 1. ser. vol. I no. 174 / DOPD 1243 23/9.

⁴ "The bull *Cum misericors* was sent to the Dominicans in the Archdioceses of Magdeburg and Bremen. The cross was to be preached in these two provinces and in Holstein, Gotland, Pomerania, Poland, Moravia, and Suravia." Maier 1994, 49.

this double-sided possibility on how to read the address of the bull, and argued that a later foundation actually corresponds better with other extant sources:

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 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.⁵

Since then I have had the opportunity to look closer at the central papal bull in question, which has turned out to be a somewhat problematical source to work with on a number of issues, among them some important details that have only increased my suspicion that it does *not* prove the existence of a Dominican convent in Visby in 1230.

The whole story started in the mid-1220's, when Duke Konrad of Masovia (1194-1247) asked the Teutonic Order to help him with a crusade against the pagan Prussians.⁶ These had allegedly started to respond violently to the Christianisation process of the region under the leadership of the Cistercian Bishop Christian of Prussia (1212-1245). Since the Teutonic Order in 1225 had been ousted from the task of subjugating and Christianising the pagan Cumans of Hungary, Duke Konrad now instead suggested that the order put its energy to good use against the pagans within his reign. In the late 1220's, the Teutonic Order was more needed elsewhere by Pope Gregory IX, as the 'unemployed' knights played an important role in his conflict with Emperor Friedrich II of the Holy Roman Empire, but when this issue apparently was settled by the beginning of September 1230, not least thanks to the Teutonic grandmaster Hermann von Salza (1210-1239), the pope rewarded the order by complying to the request from the Masovian duke. Firstly, this was done by applying the Teutonic Order officially to a crusade against the Prussians on 12 September 1230,⁷ followed by a series of additional bulls providing all the needed support and privileges for the campaign. It is within this setting that the bull concerning Friars Preachers on Gotland was made.

Actually, 'the bull' in question consists of two or three different, but highly inter-linked papal bulls. The first one, which I in the following will refer to as bull A, was issued by Pope Gregory IX in

⁵ Jakobsen 2011, 18-19.

⁶ Altaner 1924, 160; Maier 1994, 45-46.

⁷ PrUB vol. I no. 80.

Anagni on 13 September 1230. In it, he urged all Christian people of the church provinces of Magdeburg and Bremen, as well as in Poland, Moravia, Suravia, Holstein and Gotland, to support the crusade undertaken by the duke of Masovia and the Teutonic Order against the pagan Prussians, who were ignorant to the name of Christ and molested Christians living among them. Those who joined the crusade, to be led by the Teutonic Order, were granted a full remission of their sins for one year's service or if they died during the campaign.

Bull A in its full original form only exists as a transcript in the registers of the Vatican Archives in Rome. From here, it was partly transcribed and published by Odorico Rainaldi in 1694 as part of his *Annales Ecclesiastici* vol. XIII, by Johann Heinrich Hennes in 1861 in his *Urkundenbuch des Deutschen Ordens*, and in its full length by Augustin Theiner in his *Monumenta Historica Poloniae* vol. I from 1860.

Gregorius episcopus servus servorum Dei. Universis Christi fidelibus per Magdeburgensem et Bremensem provincias, Poloniā, Pomeraniā,⁸ Moraviā, Suraviā,⁹ Holisantiam et Gothlandiam constitutis, salutem etcetera. Cum misericors et miserator dominus Dei filius Ihesus Christus, cuius miserationes super omnia opera sunt ipsius, attenderet hominem iuste dampnatum, iustitia exigente vindictam, et suggestente misericordia pietatem, de inextimabili habundantia caritatis pro ipso tradidit semetipsum, et crucis sustinendo tormentum redemit preciosi sanguinis sui pretio, quem creavit, sciensque ipsum primum nimium ad peccandum, ne irrecuperabiliter, quem ad imaginem et similitudinem condidit, perderetur, si unde resurgeret non haberet, diversa constituit remedia, quibus posset veniam promereri. Nos ergo, qui licet immeriti vices eius in terris gerimus, affectantes super omnia desiderabilia comodum animarum inducimus, et ut fortius accendantur ad ipsa, suffragium impertimus. Ex litteris sane dilecti filii nobilis viri ...¹⁰ ducis Mazovie intelleximus, quod pagani Pruteni nomen Christi, quem ignorant, ad cuius cognitionem venire non volunt, exterminare tamquam¹¹ prophanum de¹² suis finibus per exterminium christianorum ibidem existentium intendentes, ipsos vehementer impugnant, destruentes terras eorum, qui resistere pre paucitate non possunt, et personas etiam miserabiliter trucidantes; et licet idem dux ordinem fratrum hospitalis sancte Marie Theutonicorum in terram suam ad christianorum auxilium introduxerit, et cum ipsius ordinis fratribus ibi existentibus Deus misericorditer operetur, conterendo per eos mirabiliter sui nominis inimicos, quia tamen ad tam arduum negotium sufficere per se nequeunt, et egent fidelium subsidiis adiuvari: Universitatem vestram monemus et hortamur, et per omnipotentem Deum obsecramus, in remissionem vobis peccaminum iniungentes, quatinus ad nimiam caritatem, qua

⁸ MPH lacks *Pomeraniā*, but its inclusion is confirmed by registers in RPR vol. I no. 8604; and RGix vol. I no. 493.

⁹ AE and UDO has *Suraniā*.

¹⁰ Whereas AE has *viri ducis Mazovie*, MHP has an open spot for the name of the duke, which rightly was *Conrado*.

¹¹ AE (here and the following places) has *tamquam*.

¹² MHP has *in*, AE, UDO and all others have *de*.

Christus nos¹³ dilexit et diligit, respectum habentes, ei ei retribuentes aliquid pro omnibus, que retribuit ipse vobis, in quos tamquam viros christianos et catholicos cadere obpropria¹⁴ exprobrantium sibi debent, potenter et viriliter accingamini, tamquam zelum Dei habentes, ad vindicandam iniuriam sui nominis, et ad liberandum proximos¹⁵ de manibus paganorum, profecturi et acturi secundum fratrum consilia predictorum, ita quod et vobis premium debeatur eternum, et infideles non possint, quod impune Christi nomen¹⁶ impugnaverint, gloriari. Cum autem multa necessitas exigat, ut illuc fidelium subsidium transmittatur, quatinus libentius securi de retributione procedant: Nos de omnipotentis Dei misericordia et beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum eius auctoritate confisi, omnibus, qui laborem istum in propriis personis subierint et expensis, et eis, qui non in expensis propriis illuc accesserint, ibidem per unius anni spatium servituri, seu illis, qui ad subventionem fidelium de propriis facultatibus ministrabunt, iuxta quantitatem subsidi et devotionis affectum peccatorum suorum veniam indulgemus, ita quod illi, qui in penitentia vera ibi decesserint, sicut transeuntes in Terre sancte subsidium plenam remissionem peccaminum consequantur. Datum Anagnie idibus septembbris, pontificatus nostri anno quarto.¹⁷

The introducing list of provinces and districts to be addressed by the call needs a few comments in order to fully understand its actual reading. In addition to the two church provinces are listed six districts, of which four belonged to other provinces: Poland to Gniezno, Moravia to Mainz and Gotland to Uppsala, while Pomerania constituted its own papally exempted diocese of Kamień Pomorski. But the remaining two districts, Surovia and Holstein, were part of the already listed church provinces of Magdeburg and Bremen respectively. So why mention them twice? Even if reading the address in two separate sections, as suggested by Christoph Maier, so that friars from the two German provinces were exhorted to preach in the six districts as well,¹⁸ it does not explain the double reference to Suravia and Holstein, unlike these were the only parts of the provinces, where the crusade was to be preached. The most plausible explanation, in my opinion, is that although Suravia and Holstein, which more or less coincided with the dioceses of Meissen and Lübeck, formally were included in each of the two north-German provinces, these particular metropolitan supremacies may have been challenged at this time. Church authorities in Meissen from the thirteenth century onwards occasionally advocated for an exemption from Magdeburg, while Holstein and Lübeck during the 1220s recurrently moved back and forth between Danish and

¹³ AE has *vox*.

¹⁴ AE has *opprobria*.

¹⁵ AE and UDO have *proximum*.

¹⁶ MHP has *nomini*.

¹⁷ Epistolae Gregorii PP. IX, anno IV, ep. 61, fol. 30. Vatican Archives, Rome. Published in AE vol. XIII no. 23, pp. 372-373 (in extracts, incl. address and date, and the section from *Ex litteris..* to ..*impugnaverint, gloriari.*); UDO vol. II no. 39 (missing the passage from *Cum misericors...* to ..*suffragium impertimur.*); and MHP vol. I no. 41 / DOPD 1230 13/9 (full transcript).

¹⁸ Maier 1994, 49.

German supremacy. Thus, Pope Gregory IX probably just wanted to make sure that no matter which church provinces Suravia and Holstein *de facto* were considered belonging to, Friars Preachers were to preach the Cross for the Teutonic cause there. That Gotland was included as the only part of Scandinavia for this campaign is of little surprise. Whereas the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden (to which Gotland nominally belonged) by this time were busy occupied with their own papally approved crusades against the pagans of Estonia and Finland respectively, the island of Gotland had for long constituted a centre for German trade and military engagements in the entire south- and east-Baltic region. Thus, the city of Visby could justly be expected to produce both military and financial support for a Teutonic crusade.

On the very same day, 13 September 1230, a second bull was issued for the Order of Preachers. This bull, which I here will refer to as *B*, is in its original form also only preserved in register transcripts. An extract, *B₁*, was made for the register of the Vatican Archives, immediately following bull A and making extensive references to this.

Gregorius episcopus etcetera. Dilectis filiis ministris et fratribus ordinis predicatorum per predictas provincias constitutis, salutem etcetera. Cum misericors et miserator dominus etcetera ut supra usque consequantur. Quare nos ad instantiam predictorum fratrum humiliter supplicantium, ut vobis super hoc predicationis officium iniungere dignaremur, discretionem vestram monemus et obsecramus in Domino, in remissionem vobis peccatorum iniungentes, quatinus assumpto predicationis officio, propter Deum ad id fideles predictos monitis et exhortationibus secundum datam a Deo vobis prudentiam diligenter et solcite inducatis. Datum ut supra.¹⁹

Bull B is addressed to “our dearest sons, the ministers and friars of the Order of Preachers present in the said provinces”, obviously referring to the provinces named in the preceding bull (A), i.e. the church provinces of Magdeburg and Bremen; whether the additional districts named in A, such as Gotland, were also meant to be included, cannot be determined from the register wording. Furthermore, the address has a somewhat peculiar wording as it uses the terms *ministris et fratribus*, ‘ministers and friars’, although the former is not a term ever used within the Dominican Order.²⁰ To judge from the papal register, the address was followed by a complete inclusion of the entire bull A from *Cum misericors..* to ..*peccaminum consequantur*. Then followed an additional sentence stating that due to a humble request from the Teutonic Order, who had asked for their crusade to be promoted through preaching by the Friars Preachers, Pope Gregory IX now enjoined the order to

¹⁹ Epistolae Gregorii PP. IX, anno IV, ep. 62, fol. 30. Vatican Archives, Rome. Published in MHP vol. I no. 42 / DOPD 1230 13/9. Its existence was also known to Rainaldi, who did not, however, reproduce any of the text (cf. AE vol. XIII no. 23, p. 372).

²⁰ Whereas the Franciscan Order had ‘ministers provincial’ to lead its provinces, the complementary term among the Dominicans was ‘prior provincial’.

take this task upon them. Bull B₁ is not explicitly dated in the register, only implicitly with a *Datum ut supra*, ‘Given as above’, which must refer to the date of bull A, i.e. 13. September 1230.

Although no actual version of the bull issued for the Order of Preachers is preserved, we know that it was received by the order, as yet another transcript, B₂, is recorded in a register of the Dominican Archives.

Gregorius episcopus, servus servorum Dei, dilectis filiis fratribus ordinis predicatorum, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Cum misericors et miserator dominus Dei filius Iesus Christus, cuius miserationes super omnia opera sunt ipsius, attendens hominem juste dampnatum, justitia exigente vindictam et sugiente misericordie pietatem, de inestimabili abundantia caritatis pro ipso tradidit semetipsum et Crucis sustinendo tormentum redemit pretiosi sanguinis sui pretio, quem creavit, sciensque ipsum primum nimium ad peccandum, ne irreparabiliter, quem ad imaginem et sui similitudinem condidit, perderet, si jam unde resurgeret, non haberet, diversa constituit remedia, quibus posset veniam promereri. Nos ergo, qui licet immeriti vices eius in terris gerimus, affectantes supra omnia desiderabilia commodum animarum, libenter fideles populos ad caritatis opera, que idem Dei unigenitus voluit causam esse salutis, inducimus et, ut fortius accendantur ad ipsa suffragium impertimur. Ex literis sane dilecti filii, nobilis viri ducis Mazouie intelleximus, quod pagani Prutheni nomen Christi, quem ignorant, ad cuius cognitionem venire non volunt, exterminare tanquam profanum de suis finibus per exterminium christianorum ibidem existentium intendentis, ipsos vehementer impugnant, destruentes terras eorum, qui resistere pre paucitate non possunt, et personas etiam miserabiliter trucidantes; et licet idem dux ordinem fratrum hospitalis sancte Marie Teutonicorum in terram suam ad christianorum auxilium introduxerit et cum ipsius ordinis fratribus ibi existentibus Dominus misericorditer operetur, conterendo per eos mirabiliter sui nominis inimicos, quia tamen ad tam arduum negotium sufficere pro se nequeunt et egent fidelium subsidiis adiuvari, universitatem vestram monemus et hortamur, et per omnipotentem Deum obsecramus, in remissionem vobis peccantium injungentes, quatenus ad nimiam caritatem, qua Christus vos dilexit et diligit, respectum habentes et ei retribuentes aliquid pro omnibus, que retribuit ipse vobis, in quos tanquam viros christianos et catholicos cadere opprobria exprobrantium sibi debent, potenter et viriliter accingamini tanquam zelum Dei habentes ad vindicandam injuriam sui nominis, et ad liberandum proximos de manibus paganorum, profecturi et acturi secundum fratrum consilia predictorum, ita quod et vobis premium debeatur eternum, et infideles non possint, quod impune Christi nomen impugnaverint, gloriari. Cum autem multa necessitas exigat, ut illuc fidelium subsidium transmittatur, et dignum sit, ut in tanto negotio laborantes debita pro labore stipendia consequantur. Quare ad instantiam predictorum fratrum humiliter supplicantium, ut vobis super hoc predicationis officium injungere dignaremur, discretionem vestram monemus et obsecramus in Domino, in remissionem vobis peccatum injungentes, quatenus assumpto predicationis officio propter Deum ad id fideles

predictos monitis et exhortationibus vestris secundum datam a Deo vobis prudentiam diligenter et sollicite inducatis. Datum Anagnie Idibus septembbris pontificatus nostri anno quarto.²¹

The Dominican transcript was published by Fr. Thomas Ripoll OP in the *Bullarium Ordinis Praedicatorum* vol. I from 1729. B₂ is interesting in several ways. Firstly, it is worth noting that it lacks the address to the order's *ministris*, probably because the Dominican scribe knew that no such rank existed in the order. More interestingly, the Dominican transcript has no geographical limitation in its preface, as it is simply addressed to all friars of the order. Thus, there is no mentioning of any north-German church provinces – or, indeed, to Gotland.²² Apart from that, B₂ can be described as the full version of B₁ with the inclusion of A, even explicitly confirming the date to be 13 September.

So, to sum up, while bull A lists a number of places – including Gotland – in which Christian people are urged to support the crusade against the Prussians, it has no mentioning of Friars Preachers whatsoever. Bull B, on the other hand, enjoins the Friars Preachers to preach in favour of the crusade to people in all the regions listed in bull A, but without naming Gotland or any other of the districts specifically; in the B₂-version even without stating any geographical limitation to the task at all. Thus, based on bulls A and B₁₋₂ alone, I expect no one would feel inclined to suggest the existence of a Dominican convent on Gotland in 1230.

However, these are obviously not the sources considered – or even known – by most Scandinavian scholars involved with the question of the Visby convent foundation. That is, instead, a no less problematical version of bull B, that I will refer to as B₃, which unlike all the others is an original parchment document, most likely kept for centuries in the archives of the Teutonic Order itself, and today to be found at the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. In addition to the somewhat damaged original (B_{3a}), the archives also have a transcript (B_{3b}) made in 1506. The B₃ has been published in three north-German nineteenth-century diplomata. It was first published in 1836 by Johannes Voigt in his *Codex diplomaticus Prussicus* vol. I, apparently based on his reading of the original B_{3a}-version. Already in 1843 it was republished, this time by K.F.W. Hasselbach and J.G.L. Kosegarten in their *Codex Pomeraniae diplomaticus* vol. I. These two editors apparently had not themselves seen any of the B₃-versions at the Prussian archives, but made their reproduction based on the transcript by Voigt with the addition of text from Rainaldi's

²¹ Ex Archivo Ordinis Libra A, fol. 305. Archives of the Dominican Order, Rome. Published in BOP vol. I no. 40 / DOPD 1230 13/9.

²² That the papal register did, nonetheless, maintain that the bull was addressed to “Ministris et fratribus ordinis predicatorum per predictas provincias constitutis” is confirmed by several subsequent publications in regesta form, such as RPR vol. I no. 8604; and RGix vol. I no. 493.

publication of A to fill out the various lacunae due to the damaged condition of B_{3a}, along with some text-critical corrections to B_{3a} itself (or to Voigt's reading of it). Finally, a third publication was made by Rudolf Philippi in *Preussisches Urkundenbuch* vol. I in 1882. Also he had taken off in Voigt's publication of B_{3a}, with some adjustments based on Philippi's own reading of B_{3b}.

Gregorius episcopus servus servorum Dei. Dilectis filiis ministris et fratribus ordinis predicatorum per Magdeburgensem et Bremensem provincias, Poloniā, Pomeraniā, Moraviā, Surabiā, Holsatiū et Gotlandiū constitutis, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Cum misericors et miserator dominus Dei filius Ihesus Christus, cuius miserationes super omnia opera sunt ipsius, attenderet hominem iuste dampnatum, iustitia exigente vindictam et suggestente misericordia pietatem, de inextimabili habundantia caritatis pro ipso tradidit semetipsum et crucis sustinendo tormentum redemit preciosi sanguinis sui pretio, quem creavit, sciensque ipsum primum nimium ad peccandum, ne irrecuperabiliter, quem ad imaginem et sui similitudinem condidit, perderetur, si, unde resurgeret, non haberet, diversa constituit remedia, quibus posset veniam promereri. Nos ergo, qui licet immeriti vices eius in terris gerimus, affectantes supra omnia desiderabilia commodum animarum, libenter fideles populos ad caritatis opera, que idem Dei unigenitus voluit causam esse salutis, inducimus et, ut fortius accendantur ad ipsa, suffragium impertimus. Ex litteris sane dilecti filii, nobilis viri ... ducis Mazovie intelleximus, [quod]²³ pagani Pruteni nomen Christi, quem ignorant, ad cuius cognitionem venire non volunt, exterminare tamquam profanum de suis finibus per exterminium [christianorum ibidem] existentium intendentis, ipsos vehementer impugnant, destruentes terras eorum, qui resistere pre paucitate non possunt, et personas etiam miserabiliter trucidantes; et licet idem dux ordinem fratrum hospitalis sancte Marie Teutonicorum in terram suam ad christianorum auxilium introduxerit et cum ipsius ordinis fratribus ibi existentibus Deus misericorditer²⁴ operetur, conterendo per eos mirabiliter sui nominis inimicos, quia tamen ad tam arduum negotium sufficere per se nequeunt et egent fidelium subsidiis adiuvari: Universos Christi fideles per Magdeburgensem et Bremensem provincias, Poloniā, Pomeraniā, Moraviā, Surabiā, Holsatiū et Gotlandiū constitutos per litteras nostras monemus et hortamur, et per omnipotentem Deum obsecramus, in remissionem eis peccaminum injungentes, ut ad nimiam caritatem, qua Christus eos dilexit et diligit, respectum habentes et ei retribuentes pro omnibus aliquid, que tribuit ipse eis, in quos tamquam viros christianos et catholicos cadere obprobria expabantur sibi debent, potenter et viriliter accingantur, tamquam habentes] zelum Dei,²⁵ ad vindicandam injuriam sui nominis et ad liberandum proximos de manibus paganorum profecturi, et acturi secundum fratrum consilia predictorum, ita quod eis pre[mium] debeat eternum²⁶] et infideles non possint, quod impune Christi nomen impugnaverint, gloriari. Cum autem multa

²³ Words in brackets are missing in Voigt's publication (CDPr) due to holes in B_{3a}, but has been inserted by Hasselbach & Kosegarten (CPoD) and Philippi (PrUB) from Rainaldi (AE) and B_{3b}.

²⁴ CDPr has *miserabiliter*, which makes little sense in the passage, and according to CPoD probably is a repetitive mistake made by the scribe, as the word is used a few lines before.

²⁵ CPoD and BOP have *zelum Dei habentes*.

²⁶ PrUB has *externum*.

necessitas exigat, ut illuc fidelium subsidium transmitt[atur et] [dignum sit, ut in]²⁷ tanto negotio laborantes debita pro labore stipendia consequantur, quatinus libentius securi de retributione procedant: Nos de omnipotentis Dei misericordia et beati Petri et Pauli apostolorum eius auctoritate confisi, omnibus, qui laborem istum in propriis personis subierint et expensis, et eis, qui non expensis propriis illuc accesserint, ibidem per unius anni spatium servituri, seu illis, qui ad subventionem fidelium de propriis facultatibus ministrabunt, juxta quantitatem subsidii et devotionis affectum peccatorum suorum veniam indulgemus, ita quod illi, qui in penitentia vera ibi decesserint, sicut transeuntes in Terre sancte subsidium, plenam remissionem peccaminum consequantur. Quare nos ad instantiam predictorum fratrum humiliter supplicantium,²⁸ ut vobis super hoc predicationis officium injungere dignaremur, discretionem vestram monemus et obsecramus in Domino, in remissionem vobis peccaminum injungentes, quatinus assumpto predicationis officio propter Deum, ad id fideles predictos monitis et exhortationibus vestris secundum datam²⁹ a Deo vobis prudentiam diligenter et sollicite inducatis. Datum Anagnie ·xv· kalendas octobris pontificatus nostri anno quarto.³⁰

Bull B₃ is challenging in several ways. First of all by its date, 17 September, and thus four days later than what is registered for A and B₁₋₂ in both the Vatican and the Dominican archives. However, since both B_{3a} and B_{3b} agree on this, and since it seems unlikely that a scribe should have misread *Idibus septembbris* for *xv· kalendas octobris*, we have no reason to dismiss that the bull sent to Prussia was indeed written four days after the two initial ones, although nothing is noted in any of the Roman archives of such a third letter. Even more complicated is the address of bull B₃, which is a sort of a mixture of the specified address for all Christians in the named northern districts of bull A with the unspecified address for Friars Preachers present ‘in the abovementioned provinces’ of bull B₁. The fact that the scribe of B₃ has inserted all the geographical names from A, something which apparently was not done in B₁ and B₂, also suggests that we are in fact dealing with a third bull, made from the former ones. This may seem trivial for the overall value of the bull, which I by no means want to label as a falsification, as its content fully corresponds to the intended meaning laid down in A and B₁₋₂, but it may be of central importance to our understanding of its address. To me it seems as if the scribe of B₃ simply wrote together the addresses of A and B₁ without necessarily having an idea of the extent to which there indeed were any Friars Preachers present in those districts, where the Teutonic crusade was to be preached – and even more so, if they then were there on a permanent basis in a convent or just worked there occasionally as itinerant

²⁷ This inclusion is only made by PrUB, not by CPoD.

²⁸ CDPr has *supplicatum*.

²⁹ CDPr has *datum*.

³⁰ GStA PK, XX, Historisches Staatsarchiv Königsberg, Pergamenturkunden, Schiebl. 2, nos. 15 (original) and 16 (transcript of 1506); the papal seal is not preserved. Published in CDPr vol. I no. 24 / CPoD vol. I no. 182 / PrUB vol. I no. 81 / DOPD 1230 17/9.

preachers.³¹ Indeed, one could even suspect the same lack of insight among those people within the Curia who formulated the initial wording of B₁, although Legate William of Modena, who may have been involved with its writing, would have been quite well-informed on the matter. However that may all be, B₂ certainly shows that the Order of Preachers itself at this point did not see the bull as addressed to any particular provinces or convents within their order, but to the order as a whole.

Before being able to claim a ‘case closed’ on the question of a Dominican convent in Visby around 1230, I also have to address a subsequent bull, C, on the same matter, but issued almost one year later on 18 July 1231. In this, Pope Gregory IX, apparently on request from Bishop Christian of Prussia, renewed his exhortation for the Friars Preachers ‘present in Pomerania and Gotland’ to preach the crusade of the Teutonic Order against the pagan Prussians. They were also allowed to commute crusading vows aimed for the Holy Land to the Prussian cause, just as they could redeem vows of weak and poor crusaders. Just like bull B₃, C is neither registered in the Vatican nor the Dominican archives, but an original parchment version has survived through the archives of the Teutonic Order. The original bears a papal seal and has no signs of being a fabrication.

Gregorius episcopus servus servorum Dei. Dilectis filiis … ministris et fratribus ordinis predicatorum per Pomeraniam et Gotlandiam constitutis, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Cum lux illa, que illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum, eos vocat de tenebris ad ammirabile lumen suum, qui relicto gentilitatis errore, quo fuerant obvoluti, fidem Christo recipiunt per baptismum, eis cibo spirituali prodesse ac materiali adesse substantia³² tanto cura diligentiori debemus, quanto ventus turbinis, egestatis amminiculis concitatus, plantas novas, que nondum potuerunt in fide firmiter radicari, facilius pertubare valeret, si utrumque vel alterum eisdem deficeret nutrimentum. Cum igitur venerabilis frater noster … episcopus Pruscie ac alii, qui per Dei gratiam ad fidem christiani nominis sunt conversi, a barbaris circumstantibus multipliciter molestentur, illorum presertim implorant auxilium ad resistendum barbare nationi, qui nondum crucis signaculum receperunt in Terre sancte subsidium profecturi, et qui, signo crucis accepto, viribus et facultatibus eisdem non suppetentibus, nequeunt exequi vota sua, nobis humiliter supplicantes, quatinus, ut religio noviter propagata celestis irrigui foveatur humore, vobis, qui sicut accepimus, potentes estis in opere ac sermone, quod ad subveniendum eis fideles per Pomeraniam et Gotlandiam constitutos diligentius animetis, onus

³¹ Admittedly, though, the existence of Dominican convents in 1230 can be established for all the other listed places. Within the church province of Magdeburg, a convent was founded at the archiepiscopal see in 1224-25 (Freed 1977, 139), while friars are known in Leipzig from around 1229, although the site for an actual priory was only received in 1231 (Butz 1998, 115); the exact definition of ‘Suravia’ at this time is uncertain, but Leipzig could qualify as part of such a Sorbian territory. The church province of Bremen housed a Dominican convent in Bremen from 1225 (Mindermann 1988, 85-86) and one in Lübeck, Holstein, from 1229 (Jensen 1874, 120). Outside these two provinces, Dominican convents were established in Gdańsk (Danzig) and Kamięć Pomorski (Cammin), Pomerania, in 1227 and 1228 at the latest respectively (Altaner 1924, 162-163 and 180); in Kraków and Sandomierz, Poland, in 1222 and 1226 respectively (Kłoczowski 1981, 73; Madej-Anderson 2007, 33-34); and in Olomouc (Olmütz), Moravia, in 1227 (Koudelka 1956, 139-140).

³² Both CDPr and the subsequent publications have the form *substancia*.

predicationis iniungere dignaremur. Quocirca discretionem vestram monemus et obsecramus in domino, in remissionem vobis peccaminum iniungentes, quatinus, assumpto sancte predicationis officio propter Deum, in predictis Pomerania et Gotlandia pauperum et debilium crucesignatorum, cum quibus duximus dispensandum, vota peregrinationis in succursum fidelium de Pruscia commutetis, necnon predictos moneatis diligenter et efficaciter inducatis, ut saltem accepto calice salutari retribuant aliquid illi, qui pro eis tradidit semetipsum, accedentes ad Pruscie partes iuxta consilium memorati episcopi et dilectorum filiorum ... preceptoris et fratrums hospitalis sancte Marie Theutonicorum, qui cum ipso assumpserunt in partibus Pruscie negotium fidei ex animo prosequendum, plantationem novellam fidei christiane tam spiritualibus armis³³ quam materialibus defensuri, tam eis quam illis, qui aliquos illuc in suis mittent expensis vel ad eorum subventionem de suis facultatibus ministrabunt, concessa per nos iuxta quantitatem subsidii et devotionis affectum venia peccatorum, secundum quod transituris Ierosolimam indulgetur. Omnes etiam exhortemini diligenter, ut elemosinam amplexantes, qua data secundum prophetam sunt omnia nobis munda, de facultatibus sibi datis a domino subvencionis manus eis tam pie porrigant, quam libenter, ita quod, cum nove regenerationis infantiam beneficiis suis in fidem Ihesu Christi curaverint solidare, retributionis eorum efficiantur,³⁴ qui eam in Christo parturierunt, participes et se religiosos probent eiusdem fidei zelatores. Datum Reate ·xv· kalendas augusti pontificatus nostri anno quinto^{35 36}.

For the central question of the present article, the bull does not really add anything new, as it uses the exact same phrases as B₃, but at least in this sense supports that the address of B₃ should not be dismissed as a mere fault. C is also notable by concentrating its focus to Pomerania and Gotland as the scenes for the requested Dominican preaching – and by explicitly addressing “the ministers and friars of the Order of Preachers *constitutis* for Pomerania and Gotland”. Several possible meanings can be attributed to the term *constitutis* in this context, which can be translated to ‘present (in)’, ‘installed (in)’ or even ‘assigned (to)’. The latter suggestion(s) could indeed support the idea of an actual Dominican convent on Gotland, but the choice of wording is peculiar, as the Friars Preachers normally did not refer to themselves as being ‘constituted’ to particular places, including their convents.³⁷ Furthermore, since the exact same wording is used in bull A for the “*Universis Christi fidelibus per Magdeburgensem et Bremensem provincias, Poloniam, Moraviam, Suraviam, Holisantiam et Gothlandiam constitutis*”, where it gives little sense to translate the meaning of

³³ PrUB lacks *armis*.

³⁴ CPoD have *retributiones efficiantur eorum*.

³⁵ PrUB erroneously has *quarto*.

³⁶ GStA PK, XX, Historisches Staatsarchiv Königsberg, Pergamenturkunden, Schiebl. 2, no. 19. Published in CDPr vol. I no. 26 / CPoD vol. I no. 186 / PrUB vol. I no. 85 / DOPD 1231 18/7.

³⁷ Even less sense does it make to address the bull to the Dominican ‘ministers’, presumably meaning the priors provincial, of Pomerania and Gotland, since no provincial leader of neither Teutonia, Polonia nor Dacia could be expected to be present in or assigned to the island of Gotland.

per... constitutis to ‘assigned to’, I believe that the only safe translation of the term in the Dominican context also is ‘present in’.

Indeed, and to conclude, I believe that the link of formulation between bull B₃ and C to bull A is essential for our understanding of the Dominican addresses used in the two former documents found in the Teutonic archives. Being so obviously based on both the intended meaning and the used wording of A and B₁₋₂, it appears to me that the literally problematical wording of the addresses in B₃ and C needs not reflect anything more than being a mixed-up, and perhaps slightly misunderstood, reminiscence of the addresses in the initial model bulls. Which may, quite understandably, have misled later scholarly readers of B₃ and C, without knowing the bulls from which they derived.³⁸ I will, therefore, maintain that none of the enjoinders of Pope Gregory IX for the Friars Preachers to preach the crusade on Gotland in 1230 and 1231 can be used as positive evidence for the existence of a Dominican convent in Visby at this time; they merely document a papal wish for Dominican preachers to promote the crusade on Gotland as well as in the rest of the German-Baltic sphere. From this alone we cannot conclude whether there were any Friars Preachers on Gotland or not. There is no certain evidence of a Dominican presence on the island until 1243, when yet another papal bull on the same matter was specifically issued for the prior and the convent in Visby; in the beginning of this article, I have argued why the existence of a formal convent in Visby in the 1230s to me appear less likely. Still, Friars Preachers, sent out from the church provinces of Bremen and Magdeburg, as seemingly called for in B₁ and B₃, could very well have been present in Gotland around 1230 already, although without being assigned to a local convent, but instead brought along from other convents across the sea, working as *terminario* preachers among German merchants and potential crusaders in Visby. Just as we know for certain that German Friars Preachers from the convents in Lübeck, Rostock and Stralsund regularly visited the German communities at the herring markets in Falsterbo and Skanør throughout the Middle Ages, even though the markets geographically belonged to the district of the Dacian-Dominican convent in Lund.³⁹ One could, however, be tempted to ask if there were indeed any Friars Preachers on Gotland at all around 1230, since Pope Gregory IX and Bishop Christian of Prussia apparently felt it necessary to repeat the general exhortation of 1230 to them particularly already in 1231. If the friars were in Visby, they apparently had not done a sufficient job preaching the Prussian crusade. If, on the other hand, they were not there, one could say that they were fairly excused...

³⁸ Neither A, B₁, B₂, B₃ or C have, to my knowledge, ever been published in a Scandinavian diplomataria. To judge from the references listed by most Scandinavian scholars, who have used the sources in a Dominican context, their acquaintance with them is based on Philippi’s reading of B₃ and C in PrUB. Jarl Gallén, though, also knew BOP’s reading of B₂, based on which he decided to re-date B₃ to 13 September. Gallén 1946, 48 note 15.

³⁹ Jakobsen 2008, 88-91; Jakobsen 2015, xx-xx.

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Map of regions and specific localities mentioned in the article



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