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Sword, Cross, and Plow vs. Pickaxe and Coin: A Comparison of the Medieval German Settlement of Prussia and Transylvania

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The German medieval settlement of Eastern Europe known as the Ostsiedlung was carried out by Germans and the Teutonic Order in both Hungary and Transylvania, but with vastly different results. Of the regions settled during the Ostsiedlung, Transylvania offered colonists some of the strongest incentives to settle there; in addition to an agreeable climate and fertile soil, those who settled in Transylvania also stood to enjoy generous expansions of legal and economic freedoms far beyond the rights they held in their homelands. Yet the Ostsiedlung in Transylvania was arguably a failure compared to the success of the movement in Prussia. Much of this contrast can be explained by comparing the settlement process in each region, conducted largely by peaceful means in Transylvania but by the sword and cross in Prussia. Conquest and conversion supported by secular and ecclesiastical authorities allowed Germans to dominate Prussia and cement the primacy of German language and culture there. By contrast, peaceful settlement left Transylvania's large indigenous populations intact and independent. This cultural plurality, along with the long journey required to reach Transylvania and inconsistent support for settlement there, ensured German settlers in Transylvania never became more than a minority population.

The medieval settlement of Prussia and Transylvania, from here on referred to by its German name, *Ostsiedlung*, was carried out by Germans and the Teutonic Order in both regions, but to vastly different ends. The German settlement of Transylvania was mostly peaceful, with the majority of settlers being miners, merchants, and peasants. The German settlement of Prussia, however, was done by the sword and the cross, with most of the population either killed or forcibly converted and assimilated. The extent and permanence of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania depended on geography, secular and ecclesiastical support for it, methods of conquest and settlement, degrees of cultural assimilation, and the number of settlers. This research paper begins in the mid-eleventh century in both locations, although some background information is provided. This starting point was chosen because it represents the beginning of the Northern Crusades in the Baltic with the Wendish Crusade in 1147 and King Géza II of Hungary's invitation to Germans to settle Transylvania. The research concludes

at the dawn of the fourteenth century. By this time, the Prussian Crusade was over and the first ruling dynasty of Hungary, the Árpáds, had gone extinct.

I. Geography

The scope and duration of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania were predicated on simple geography – climate, soil fertility, population density, and more importantly, distance. Bishop Frederick of Hamburg’s 1106 charter to settlers attests to the poor state of the land in the Baltic region: “These men came to us and earnestly begged us to grant them certain lands in our bishopric, which are uncultivated, swampy, and useless to our people.”¹ In contrast, the climate and quality of the land in Hungary and Transylvania was superb. The twelfth-century chronicler Otto of Freising wrote that Hungary was rich in both its natural beauty and the fertility of its soil.² The land was much more fertile and the climate more agreeable in Hungary and Transylvania than in Prussia, but far fewer Germans settled there because of the long journey.

The relative emptiness of Eastern Europe and what Western Europeans perceived as poor land management practices by Slavs, coupled with a population explosion in Western Europe, created a belief among Western Europeans that it was their God-given right to claim and tame lands in Eastern Europe. Of Hungary, Miklós Molnár writes, “There was no shortage of exploitable land in the time of the Angevins. On the contrary, with 3 million inhabitants distributed over a territory of around 300,000 square kilometers, population density was far lower than in Europe’s more developed countries.”³ Hungary also contained very few urban settlements, which accounted for only three percent of the

¹ “Charter to German Settlers,” in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 265.

² Otto traveled through Hungary during the Second Crusade with the army of King Conrad III of Germany. Otto is best known for his *Gesta Friderici Imperatoris*, a biography of Frederick Barbarossa. See Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 137.

³ Miklós Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary*, trans. Anna Magyar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 47.

overall population.⁴ In the Baltic as well, Western Europeans commented on the lack of urban development.⁵ The low population density and low level of urban development contributed to Western European ideas that Eastern Europeans were backward and inferior.

The emptiness of the Baltic, coupled with the perceived poor land management practices of the Slavs, created a mentality among Western Europeans similar to that of the nineteenth-century American concept of Manifest Destiny. These medieval settlers felt that they could put the land to better use than could their Slav counterparts. A late-fourteenth-century Cistercian poem about the earlier settlement of monks in Poland states:

The monks were scarcely surviving and were very poor,
For the country was wooded and without farmers,
And Poland's poor people were not industrious;
They plowed the sandy soil with wooden plows, not iron,
And with no more than two oxen at a time.⁶

The monks were critical of the Slavs' agricultural practices, which they found primitive and inferior to the methods of Western Europeans, and believed that this inferiority justified German settlement of the region. Otto of Freising referred to Hungarians as "human monsters" due to their inability to properly work the land.⁷ Half a millennium later, British colonists and American frontiersmen used similar logic to justify their taking of Native American lands in North America. Jan M. Piskorski writes that the German colonists were "convinced of their superior civilization and had a sense of mission."⁸ Because the Slavs did not understand appropriate methods of farming, the Germans argued, it was the Germans' prerogative to settle and properly develop the lands of Eastern Europe.

⁴ Molnár, 48.

⁵ "Poem Describing Cistercian Settlement," in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 267.

⁶ "Poem Describing Cistercian Settlement," 267.

⁷ Bartlett, 137.

⁸ Jan M. Piskorski, "The Medieval Colonization of Central Europe as a Problem of World History and Historiography," *German History* 22 (2004): 336-37.

While climate, soil fertility, population density, agricultural practices, and a feeling of ethnocentrism were all certainly factors, distance had a larger impact on the lasting effects of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania. The logistics involved in medieval travel, along with the distance of traveling from German lands to Transylvania, made the journey significantly more difficult than traveling to Prussia. Consider the difference between travelling from Magdeburg, a major Saxon city in the Middle Ages, to Kronstadt (modern-day Brasov), the capital of medieval Burzenland in Transylvania, and traveling from Magdeburg to the Teutonic Knights' headquarters at Marienburg Castle (modern-day Malbork, Poland). The distance from Magdeburg to Brasov is more than 1,500 kilometers. In the Middle Ages, a journey like this one would have taken more than a month and a half, assuming that the settlers were able to travel thirty kilometers per day.⁹ In contrast, the distance from Magdeburg to Malbork is closer to six hundred kilometers, and the trip between the two cities would have taken less than three weeks, again assuming thirty kilometers per day. Thus, secular German leaders encouraged settlement in Prussia and other Baltic lands because they had a stake in the process themselves due to these lands' proximity to their own. German lay and ecclesiastical figures hoped to gain revenue by incorporating more land into their territories. Settlement in Transylvania, controlled by the Kingdom of Hungary, would not have been so eagerly encouraged by secular German leaders.

II. Secular and Ecclesiastical Support in Prussia

The papacy and German secular leaders both enthusiastically supported the efforts of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia, primarily through their support for the Northern Crusades and the Teutonic Order. The crusades in the Baltic region attracted German holy warriors, accompanied by merchants and farmers who settled in Prussia. One of the most obvious ways that the papacy supported the

⁹ Peter Spufford writes that medieval four-wheeled carts were able to travel thirty to forty kilometers per day between Salins and Paris, while two-wheeled carts covered less than thirty kilometers a day. See Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006), 200.

Ostsiedlung was through the multitude of crusades that it called against the Slavs of the Baltic region. The so-called Northern Crusades were first elevated to equal status with the crusades in the Holy Land during the twelfth century by the granting of full indulgences to soldiers who embarked upon them. In an 1147 letter preaching the Wendish Crusade, Bernard of Clairvaux wrote that “we, by virtue of our authority, promised [those secular and religious leaders assembled at the council in Frankfurt] the same spiritual privileges as those enjoy who set out towards Jerusalem.”¹⁰ In 1218, Pope Honorius III granted the same indulgences to the subjects of the German ecclesiastical provinces closest to the Baltic region for their participation in the Prussian Crusade.¹¹ A separate letter from Honorius stated that those who had taken crusader vows but who were too poor or too weak to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem would be granted the same indulgences for traveling to Prussia.¹² This extension of indulgences to warriors going on the Prussian Crusade meant that pious Germans could fulfill their crusading duties without making the arduous and expensive journey to the Levant. Maria Starnawska writes that once the crusades were extended beyond the Holy Land, “The ‘substitute crusades’ were organized on the model developed in Palestine: they included such practices as marking the participants of the crusades with the sign of the cross, indulgences, confessions, masses, and communions before a battle.”¹³ The Northern Crusades against pagan Slavs were thus given both the same appearance and spiritual rewards as the crusades in the eastern Mediterranean against Muslims, which encouraged further German settlement in these Slavic lands.

¹⁰ Saint Bernard of Clairvaux was a Doctor of the Church and prominent Cistercian monk responsible for preaching the Second Crusade. He also encouraged the Wendish Crusade, and promised the same spiritual rewards for participants, namely full indulgences, as those who took part in the crusades against the Muslims. See Bernard of Clairvaux,” 269.

¹¹ “Regesten 1218,” *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch: Regesten und Texte zur Geschichte Preußens und des Deutschen Ordens*, comp. Stuart Jenks and Jürgen Sarnowsky, accessed March 27, 2012, <http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/Landesforschung/pub/orden1218.html>, PrUB 1.1.20.

¹² *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.21.

¹³ Maria Starnawska, “Military Orders and the Beginning of Crusades in Prussia,” in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, ed. Steven Runciman, Zsolt Hunyadi, and József Laszlovszky (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 418.

The popes of the thirteenth century did not neglect the Baltic; in fact, they envisioned and preached several successful crusades against the pagans who lived there. Pope Gregory IX, who was pope from 1227 to 1241, called upon the clergy from Magdeburg, Bremen, Poland, Pomerania, Moravia, Sorabia, Holstein, and Gotland to preach the crusade against the Prussians.¹⁴ Richard Spence has argued that during Gregory's reign, the Baltic Crusade became a power struggle between the pope and the crusaders over control of the expedition, and he has also argued that Gregory's policies resulted in a more powerful Teutonic Order, not greater papal control over the crusade.¹⁵ However, I would argue that Pope Innocent IV, one of Gregory's successors, was much more involved in the affairs of the Teutonic Order and the Northern Crusades than his predecessor was. During Innocent's eleven-year reign, he appeared in 104 entries in the *Preußische Urkundenbuch* (roughly nine entries per year), while Gregory appeared in only forty-six entries during his fourteen-year reign (roughly three entries per year). In addition, the last crusade preached by Innocent IV garnered much popular support and succeeded in capturing Samland, the peninsula northwest of Königsberg. This crusade was led by King Przemysl of Bohemia and Margrave Otto of Brandenburg, and also included Bishops Bruno of Olomouc, Heidenreich of Kulm, and Anselm of Warmia.¹⁶ Clearly, the papacy continued to play a major role in the crusades even after Gregory's attempts to control them supposedly backfired.

King Przemysl and Margrave Otto were not the only secular leaders to take part in the Northern Crusades; others were also eager to participate. In fact, it was a secular leader, Duke Conrad of Masovia, who invited the Teutonic Order to aid in the defense of his lands in Prussia when the Sword Brothers proved inadequate at this task. Nicholas von Jeroschin wrote in his *Chronicle of Prussia* that "[Conrad] called to his court all the bishops and noblemen who could be persuaded to come, revealed his

¹⁴ *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.81.

¹⁵ Richard Spence, "Pope Gregory IX and the Crusade on the Baltic," *The Catholic Historical Review* 69 (1983): 16-17.

¹⁶ *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.304.

intentions [to invite the Teutonic Order] to them and asked their opinion. When the lords heard what he had in mind they thought it was a good idea and agreed whole-heartedly.”¹⁷ The Prussian Crusade was initiated by a secular noble and thus received much secular support. Other notable secular leaders who participated in the crusade effort in Prussia included Margrave Henry III of Meissen, Duke Albert I of Brunswick-Lüneburg, Margrave John I of Brandenburg, and Leszek II the Black.

In addition to participating in the crusades, secular leaders also encouraged the settlement of their subjects in Prussia and donated lands, wealth, and materials to the Teutonic Order. In 1223, the Bishop of Prussia was given donations of the villages of Szarne, Rudky, and Tushino by Duke Conrad of Masovia and an annual payment from Margrave Albrecht of Brandenburg.¹⁸ According to the Golden Bull of Rimini, Conrad also “[p]romised and offered [the Grand Master] and his brothers Kulmerland, the territory between [Prince Conrad] and the Prussian territory, so that [the Teutonic Knights would] take the pains to move into Prussia and take it into their possession to the honour and glory of God.”¹⁹ By giving the Teutonic Order any Prussian lands that they might conquer in the future, Conrad provided the Teutonic Knights with ample incentive to carry out the conquest.

When Duke Leszek of Poland gifted the Bishop of Prussia the village of Gut Malininow, this grant came “with market rights and tax exemptions for the colonists.”²⁰ These market rights and duty exemptions demonstrate the understanding that secular leaders had of the importance of German colonization in Prussia. In the transition from traditional Slav markets, which utilized a royal monopoly system, to German towns, “The prince gives up part of the revenues due him as sovereign in return for rents paid by the colonists. In agriculture, these rents take the place of *corvées*; in trade, they replace

¹⁷ Nicholaus von Jeroschin, *The Chronicle of Prussia by Nicolaus von Jeroschin: A History of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia 1190-1331, Crusade Text in Translation*, trans. Mary Fischer (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 46.

¹⁸ *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.43.

¹⁹ The Golden Bull of Rimini was a decree by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II which, in 1226, confirmed the rights and territories of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia. See László Pószán, “Prussian Missions and the Invitation of the Teutonic Order into Kulmerland,” in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, ed. Steven Runciman, Zsolt Hunyadi, and József Laszlovszky (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 438.

²⁰ *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.51. Author’s translation.

monopoly income.”²¹ This policy shift enabled merchants to thrive in the new German market towns and created an incentive to urbanize. Therefore, both Slavic princes and German secular leaders understood the benefits to be gained from the *Ostsiedlung*.

The Teutonic Order and the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia were also able to profit from the conflict between the papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor. The pope and the emperor were the two chief patrons of the Order, but Eric Christiansen writes that “so suspicious of each other’s interference were they that they preferred to keep outbidding each other for the friendship of the Order than [to] risk alienating the grand masters by inhibiting their freedom of action.”²² Both the pope and the emperor tried to take control of the Prussian Crusade as well as the land gained from it, but their conflict with each other kept them from fully realizing their goals. For instance, in 1224, Emperor Frederick II took the newly converted peoples of the Baltic region into his kingdom, brought them under his protection, and exempted them from the jurisdiction of their native princes; however, this claim was never confirmed.²³ This conflict allowed the Order to choose the most favorable privileges granted to them by each patron, who confirmed and reconfirmed these rights because they were all too eager to please the grand masters. Thus, the support of the pope, emperor, and other German secular leaders was a major factor in the success of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia.

III. Secular and Ecclesiastical Support in Transylvania

Unlike in Prussia, German settlement in Transylvania received limited papal and secular German support; in addition, the support of the Hungarian king was unreliable. However, Germans played a significant role in the development of the Kingdom of Hungary; although a small minority of the overall population, Germans in Hungary and Transylvania controlled a disproportionately high amount of

²¹ Richard Koebner, “German Towns and Slav Markets,” in *Change in Medieval Society: Europe North of the Alps, 1050-1500*, ed. Sylvia Lettice Thrupp (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 32.

²² Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 104.

²³ *Das Virtuelle Preußische Urkundenbuch*, PrUB 1.1.52.

wealth and power. German immigration to Hungary began with King Stephen's marriage to the Bavarian princess Gisela, who brought along a large German retinue. Such entourages were the most common form of German immigration to the Kingdom of Hungary before Géza II invited Germans to settle in Transylvania in the mid-twelfth century. Martyn Rady writes, "The demand for warriors trained in western methods of combat, together with land-starvation in Germany and the supposed rewards available in the Hungarian royal household, fed this immigration."²⁴ German immigration to Hungary in the early Middle Ages was mostly limited to knights and nobility. However, King Stephen set a precedent for further and more extensive German immigration. "As settlers come from various countries and provinces," he wrote in his *Admonitions* to his son Emeric,

They bring with them various languages and customs, various instructive concepts and weapons, which decorate and glorify the royal court, but intimidate foreign powers. A country which has only one language and one kind of custom is weak and fragile. Therefore, my son, I instruct you to face [the settlers] and treat them decently, so that they will prefer to stay with you rather than elsewhere.²⁵

Thus, King Stephen provided a model for future immigration to Hungary, both military and civil, and encouraged his successors to continue his policy.

While the kings of Hungary understood the important military role that immigrants played, they also recognized the potential economic value of immigrants. Hungarian kings had sole control of settling immigrants on royal lands, and according to Nora Berend, "Taxes and services of immigrants were an important source of revenue and power for the kings. It is not surprising therefore that many immigrants were granted privileges by the king."²⁶ The settlement of Germans in Transylvania began when Géza II "invited a group of impoverished knights and land-hungry peasants from the Rhine-Moselle region to settle in Transylvania along the Olt River, on land which, according to a 1224 charter,

²⁴ Martyn Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 29.

²⁵ Paul Lendvai, *The Hungarians: A Thousand Years of Victory in Defeat* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003), 2-3.

²⁶ Nora Berend, "Immigrants and Locals in Medieval Hungary: 11th – 13th Centuries," in *Grenzräume und Grenzüberschreitungen Im Vergleich: Der Osten und der Westen des Mittelalterlichen Lateineuropa*, ed. Klaus Herbers and Nikolas Jaspert (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), 208.

had been 'deserted' (*deserta*)."²⁷ These immigrants, who came to be known as Transylvanian Saxons, were intended to cultivate the fertile soil and introduce a forestry culture to the heavily wooded region.²⁸ In 1224, King Andrew II of Hungary proclaimed the *Diploma Andreanum*, which stated that people of different ethnic or legal status could not live in the same administrative region. János M. Bak, György Bónis, and James Ross Sweeney write, "The territorial rights granted to the Székelys and Saxons allowed them to form homogeneous societies. Thus began a process of social differentiation that culminated in the recognition of three distinct and distinctive feudal 'nations': the Hungarians, the Székelys, and the Saxons."²⁹ In the late thirteenth century, King Andrew III gave the Transylvanian Saxons equal legal footing with the Székelys and Hungarian nobility in terms and conditions of military service, taxes, tithes, rights of succession and inheritance, and legal status.³⁰ Thus, the legal status of Transylvanian Saxons was more favorable than the status of Germans in Prussia; evidently, other factors mattered more.

The next great wave of German immigration to Transylvania occurred during the reign of Andrew II, who invited the Teutonic Knights to the region. Prior to the arrival of the Order, protection of the eastern border of the Kingdom of Hungary was in the hands of the semi-nomadic Pechenegs. As the power of the nomadic Cumans increased in the eleventh century, the Pechenegs were unable to curb their invasions.³¹ Andrew's solution was to invite the Teutonic Order, along with other Germans, to

²⁷ László Makkai, András Mócsy, and Béla Köpeczi, *History of Transylvania Volume I. From the Beginnings to 1606* (Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, 2001), 421.

²⁸ Zoltan Kosztolnyik, *From Coloman the Learned to Béla III (1095-1196): Hungarian Domestic Policies and Their Impact upon Foreign Affairs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 113.

²⁹ Székelys are an ethnic subgroup of Hungarians who live in the modern counties of Covasna, Mureş and Harghita in Transylvania. In the Middle Ages, they were given the Székelyföld or Székely Land in the Carpathian Mountains to guard the eastern frontier of Hungary. See Makkai, Mócsy, and Köpeczi, *History of Transylvania*, 425.

³⁰ János M. Bak, György Bónis, and James Ross Sweeney, *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary, 1: 1000-1301* (Bakersfield, Calif.: Charles Schlacks, Jr., 1989), 43-45.

³¹ Both the Cumans and Pechenegs were Turkic peoples from Central Asia who initially came to Hungary as raiders before settling down and serving as guardians of the Eastern frontier. See József Laszlovszky and Zoltán Soós, "Historical Monuments of the Teutonic Order in Transylvania," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, ed. Zsolt Hunyadi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 322.

settle in the Burzenland and defend the border of the kingdom.³² This arrangement could have been beneficial to both Hungary and the Order; indeed, a similar arrangement with the Hospitallers existed from 1247 to 1260 during the reign of Béla IV, but the Teutonic Order got greedy.³³

The Teutonic Order overstepped its bounds by expanding its influence beyond the Carpathians and attempting to create an *Ordenstaat*, an independent state ruled by the Order. The sense of entitlement that led to the Order's expulsion from Transylvania was likely inspired by the lavish privileges offered to them by King Andrew II in exchange for their protection of his realm's eastern border. József Laszlovszky and Zoltán Soós write:

The privileges allowed them to build wooden castles and towns (*castra lignea et urbes ligneas*); to be dispensed from the hosting of the members of the royal court and from the paying of special taxes (*liberos denarios at pondera*); not to pay any other royal taxes (*exactione*); to found markets (*libera fora*); and to keep gold and silver found in that area, with partial payments made to the royal Treasury.³⁴

These privileges were among the most generous in the Kingdom of Hungary. When the Order first arrived in Transylvania, it had no intentions of creating an *Ordenstaat*. At this time, it would have been unthinkable to attempt to move the primary operations of the Order from the Holy Land to Transylvania because there was still hope that the situation in the Levant would improve.³⁵ However, the intentions of the Order began to change as its position in Transylvania grew stronger. Florin Curta writes, "Judging by their request to Pope Honorius III that their domain on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains be placed under papal authority, the ultimate goal of the Knights seems to have been to create a state on

³² Burzenland is a historical region of southeastern Transylvania centered on Braşov. Other Transylvanian Saxon areas included Nösnerland, centered on Bistriţa, Altland, centered on Sibiu, and Weinland, centered on Sighişoara. See Makkai, Mócsy, and Köpeczi, *History of Transylvania*, 424.

³³ Anthony Luttrell, "The Hospitallers in Hungary Before 1418: Problems and Sources," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, ed. Zsolt Hunyadi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 271-72.

³⁴ Laszlovszky and Soós, 323.

³⁵ When the Teutonic Knights were invited to Transylvania in 1211, the order was only twenty years old and in a relatively strong position. The Fifth Crusade, largely an Austrian and Hungarian venture, failed to conquer Egypt in the 1210s. However, the diplomatic maneuvers of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II and Grand Master Hermann von Salza resulted in the recapture of Jerusalem and Jaffa by Christian forces in 1229. See Laszlovszky and Soós, 322.

the southeastern frontier of Hungary.”³⁶ As the Order’s intentions began to shift, the Knights came into conflict with the Hungarian king.

Realizing the importance of the Order’s task, King Andrew ignored the early transgressions of the Knights, but they eventually became a threat to royal power. The Order’s early abuses included building stone castles, occupying royal areas, and insisting on changes to the original agreement.³⁷ In 1222, Andrew granted the Order even more generous rights, but it continued to spread beyond the Carpathians and occupied new territories. This expansion angered Andrew, who sent a large army to expel the Order in 1225. The pope attempted to intervene, but he was too late.³⁸ Laszlovszky and Soós claim that these events were a “[n]atural process, because the Teutonic Order had its own territories in the Holy Land, and they had more independence than was typical in the Hungarian Kingdom. In their *Hinterland*, in the Holy Roman Empire, the knights or the nobility had great freedom compared with the nobility of the Hungarian Kingdom.”³⁹ The expulsion of the Teutonic Knights from Transylvania can be seen as a misunderstanding between the Teutonic Knights of Western Europe, who were used to having greater freedoms, and the king of Hungary, whose own subjects had less sovereignty than he bestowed upon the Order. After the Order was expelled from Transylvania, the vast majority of the German settlers who came with it stayed on and assimilated into the Transylvanian Saxon population.⁴⁰ The *Ostsiedlung* in Transylvania commanded much less attention from the pope than it did in Prussia, but the *Ostsiedlung* did occupy Hungarian royal favor until the Teutonic Order overstepped its rights and was expelled.

³⁶ Florin Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 405.

³⁷ Laszlovszky and Soós, 324.

³⁸ Laszlovszky and Soós, 324.

³⁹ Laszlovszky and Soós, 323.

⁴⁰ Curta, 405.

IV. Sword, Cross, and Plow: Methods of Conquest and Settlement in Prussia

The conquest and settlement of Prussia were performed by the sword (crusades and secular military conquests), the cross (missionary work and forced conversion), and the plow (peaceful settlement of peasants). Before any military conquest or crusade was attempted in the Baltic region, the Catholic Church undertook missionary work to convert the pagan Slav population. However, this effort proved difficult because the Prussians were heavily entrenched in their beliefs. Nicholas von Jeroschin complained of the difficulties of converting the Prussians, writing, "Because the good seed did not fall on good ground it did not bear any fruit. Their evil, sinful wickedness had made them so stubborn that no teaching or exhortation or blessing could move them from their error or take away their false belief."⁴¹ Christiansen writes, "The paganism of the Balts was to reveal remarkable powers of development wherever it was saved from the first impact of the Church Militant by determined war-leaders. Alone among the ancient religions of Europe, it was to provide a straight answer to the challenge of medieval Catholicism."⁴² Because the resistance of the pagan Slavs to conversion was so stiff, more drastic measures were deemed necessary. Before the Prussian Crusade, the pagan populace was not only unwelcoming to missionaries, but was also often brutal. The Prussians were particularly harsh to missionaries, as both Adalbert of Prague and Bruno of Querfurt were murdered while visiting Prussia around the year 1000.⁴³ Even when early missionaries were not murdered, the conversion of the pagan Slavs remained elusive. While not focused on Prussia, Henry of Livonia's chronicle is an important source for accounts of attempts to convert the pagan Balts. In the latter part of the twelfth century, Bishop

⁴¹ Nicholas von Jeroschin, 43.

⁴² Christiansen, 38.

⁴³ Saint Adalbert served as Bishop of Prague in the 980s, but left this position and traveled to Hungary where he baptized Grand Prince Géza and his son Stephen, the future king. After Hungary, Adalbert traveled to Prussia where he was killed while attempting to convert the pagan populace in 997. Saint Bruno of Querfurt wrote the *Life of St. Adalbert* about the then-recent conversion of the Hungarians. Bruno was also a missionary and was beheaded while trying to convert Prussians in 1009. See Pószán, 429.

Meinhard of Uexküll tried to entice the locals to convert by having a stone fort built for them in the Western style. However, once the fort was completed, the Livonians who had been baptized reverted to their pagan ways, and those who had not yet been baptized refused to accept the sacrament.⁴⁴ In the mid-1210s, it became apparent that peaceful conversion was not working, and secular rulers began to question the success of the missionary effort. The failure of peaceful conversion to achieve any lasting results during the two centuries it was employed finally convinced the pope to call for a crusade against the Prussians in 1217.⁴⁵ This failure did not mean that all attempts at peaceful conversion were abandoned, however, as Bishop Christian petitioned the pope in 1218 to allow him to “raise Prussian boys to become clerics who would take part in the missionary work.”⁴⁶ Later missionary work was more successful, as by this time the Christians had established control over Prussia through military conquest.

Due to the failure of missionary efforts to convert the Slavs, the pope allowed crusades to be fought against the pagans of Northern Europe. The precedent for the Prussian Crusade was set during the Wendish Crusade, which occurred seventy years before in a region to the west of Prussia. This endeavor was the first crusade fought against non-Muslims, and it is sometimes considered part of the Second Crusade. In his letter to a council of ecclesiastical and secular leaders at Frankfurt, Bernard of Clairvaux called for the Christian participants of the Wendish Crusade to either completely wipe out or convert the pagans. Bernard wrote, “We utterly forbid that for any reason whatsoever a truce should be made with these peoples, either for the sake of money or for the sake of tribute, until such a time as, by God’s help, they shall be either converted or wiped out.”⁴⁷ While this is how Bernard of Clairvaux wanted the crusade to be conducted, in reality the crusaders reached an agreement with the Wends in

⁴⁴ Henry's chronicle consists of four books covering events in Livonia from 1186 to 1226. The first book details Meinhard's baptism of the Livonians. The second book relates the death of Berthold of Hanover, the second Bishop of Uexküll, at the hands of Livonians. The third book describes the founding of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, while the fourth book tells of their conflicts with Estonians, Lithuanians, Semigallians and others. See “The Chronicle of Henry of Livonia,” in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 273.

⁴⁵ Pósan, 433.

⁴⁶ Pósan, 433.

⁴⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, 268-69.

which the pagans were to be baptized in exchange for the release of Danish prisoners.⁴⁸ The Wendish Crusade was ultimately a failure because the baptisms and conversions of the pagans were false, no land was gained by Christians, and it resulted in mistrust between the Danish and Saxon participants.⁴⁹ However, despite the disappointing outcome of the Wendish Crusade, the bloodthirsty words of Bernard of Clairvaux provided a blueprint for subsequent crusades. Nicholas von Jeroschin writes that when the crusaders captured the castle at Partegal, “none of the Prussians there survived; all of them were dispatched forthwith in mortal terror to join their comrades-in-arms in hell.”⁵⁰ Decades after the initial conquest of Prussia, the Teutonic Order brutally suppressed a pagan uprising in the following manner: “They gathered together all the manpower they could and launched an attack on Pogesania, devastating the whole country, burning and looting, killing all the men they encountered and taking away horses, cattle, children and women as prisoners.”⁵¹ The brutality of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia would contrast starkly with the more peaceful settlement of Transylvania, which is discussed below. However, the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia was not an entirely violent process.

Peaceful settlement often accompanied the processes of conversion and military conquest, although the latter made it more lasting and tenable. Allen and Amt write, “The establishment of Christianity was often seen as an important prerequisite to settlement, as the placement of churches and monasteries helped to ease the subjugation of the native population while providing justification for the defense of the newly acquired territory.”⁵² Once a monastery was established, additional settlers were needed to provide tithes and protection. As the Church expanded throughout the settled territories, so did the adoption of Western European culture and agricultural practices. Robert Bartlett

⁴⁸ “Helmold’s *Chronicle of the Slavs*,” in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 272.

⁴⁹ Christiansen, 53.

⁵⁰ Nicholas von Jeroschin, 84.

⁵¹ In fact, there were five Prussian uprisings in the thirteenth century. The First Prussian Uprising was preceded by Christian defeats at the Battle of the Ice against Novgorod and the Battle of Legnica against the Mongols. The so-called Great Prussian Uprising lasted fourteen years and was only defeated with the help of King Ottokar II of Bohemia. Nicholas von Jeroschin, 177.

⁵² “Poem Describing Cistercian Settlement,” 267.

writes, “The spread of cult and the spread of cultivation went hand in hand.”⁵³ The peaceful settlement of Prussia was made possible, and enticing, by the liberal land grants given.

The generosity of land grants and privileges for new settlers in Prussia varied over time, but overall they provided a better life than that available to most people in Western Europe at the time. In the early twelfth century, Bishop Frederick of Hamburg laid down regulations for German colonists who wanted to settle in Slavic lands. Bishop Frederick’s charter stated that German settlers should pay one penny per hide of land per annum, went on to define the dimensions of a hide, and listed the tithes for different animals. This document also includes a required annual payment from settlers so that the settlers could hold their own courts and not be subjected to the possible injustices of indigenous courts.⁵⁴ More than a century later, the Teutonic Knights were even more generous. In 1236, the Grand Master of the Order enfeoffed one noble with a fort, three hundred hides of land, and the tithe from three villages in Prussia, in return for which the noble owed a pound of wax, a mark of silver, and a tithe of grain every year. In addition, the enfeoffed noble was not required to perform any military service.⁵⁵ This level of generosity was almost unheard of in Western Europe, and it was not replicated in Transylvania. It was also common for German colonists in Prussia to receive exemptions from rents and tithes in the early years of their settlement. The Bishop of Hildesheim exempted settlers in his diocese from rent and tithes during the time they cleared the soil with a mattock and an additional seven rent-free years once a plow could be used.⁵⁶ This generosity with land grants, privileges, and exemptions for settlers to Prussia created a lure for German colonists that was not quite replicated in Transylvania.

The *Ostsiedlung* succeeded in Prussia because it affected both rural areas, where large numbers of peasant settlers took advantage of the generosity of grants, and urban centers, which were wholly transformed. This transformation is embodied in the shift from Slav markets to German-style towns.

⁵³ Bartlett, 153.

⁵⁴ “Charter to German Settlers,” 265-66.

⁵⁵ Christiansen, 206.

⁵⁶ Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 124.

One of the primary differences between these two types of urban centers is that Slav markets existed to support the prince's royal monopoly and only contained buildings that were essential to its functioning; very few people actually lived in these urban centers.⁵⁷ As more and more German merchants arrived, the local Slav rulers granted them special privileges, and the system of royal monopolies collapsed.⁵⁸ Richard Koebner argues, "Thus colonial towns arose where once there was only an empty market space and a tiny colony of foreigners. The towns were modest in scale but it was in the interest of lord and colonists alike that they should grow."⁵⁹ By the year 1300, much of the Baltic region was dotted with German towns such as Danzig, Elbing and Königsberg.⁶⁰ Bartlett writes, "It was the small market town that was the vehicle of ineradicable cultural transformation in the great land spaces of Europe."⁶¹ The spatial and demographic shift that the *Ostsiedlung* embodied transformed Prussia from a small, largely ignored Slavic region into a powerful German state. The way in which the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia combined political, economic, and religious motivations made it distinct from the same movement in Transylvania.

V. Pickaxe, Coin and Plow: Methods of Conquest and Settlement in Transylvania

The *Ostsiedlung* in Transylvania lacked some of the major components that the settlement in Prussia had, such as religious and military foci, but it did have key economic and political effects. The German settlement in Transylvania was done through mostly secular and peaceful means, with the vast majority of settlers comprising merchants, miners, and peasants. Germans initially came to the Kingdom

⁵⁷ Koebner, "German Towns and Slav Markets," 39.

⁵⁸ Koebner, 46.

⁵⁹ Koebner, 46.

⁶⁰ Towns like Danzig, Elbing and Königsberg were founded by loosely associated German merchants, primarily from Hamburg and Lübeck. These towns later joined the Hanseatic League, which came into being in the mid-fourteenth century (past the scope of this paper). See Ulf Christian Ewert and Marco Sunder, "Trading Networks, Monopoly, and Economic Development in Medieval Northern Europe: an Agent-Based Simulation of Early Hanseatic Trade" (paper presented at the 9th European Historical Economics Society Conference, Dublin, September 2011), http://www.wifa.uni-leipzig.de/fileadmin/user_upload/iew-vwl/Docs/Sunder/Ewert_Sunder_EHESC.pdf.

⁶¹ Bartlett, 181.

of Hungary in the form of much-needed heavy cavalry, but this need for troops was less critical in Transylvania.⁶² In the *Gesta Hungarorum*, Simon of Kéza lists the foreign knights who came to Hungary and the manner of their arrival. The knights Wolfger and Hedrich brought with them armored knights and were given land upon which to build a fort.⁶³ Later, Simon states that the knight Geoffrey fled Meissen and sought a haven in Hungary after killing the landgrave of Thuringia in a revolt; he then served the Hungarian king.⁶⁴ These German knights, along with foreign clerics, introduced the soft power of their time, courtly and chivalric culture, to Hungary and brought troubadours with them.⁶⁵ It was thanks to the precedent set by these early colonists that Germans later came to settle in Transylvania.

In the mid-twelfth century, Géza II first invited Germans to settle in Transylvania. These earliest settlers are called “Teutons,” “Flamands,” and “Latins” in the sources. The term “Transylvanian Saxon,” which came to identify all Germans in Transylvania, did not appear until 1206, when it came to signify their legal status, not a homogeneous ethnic group.⁶⁶ The Transylvanian Saxons included knights, farmers, herders, foresters, traders, and miners. László Makkai, András Mócsy, and Béla Köpeczi write, “The German peasants, for their part, applied advanced agricultural techniques, and enjoyed greater freedom than in their homeland, for they were allowed to choose their *geréb* [the knight who would perform military duties in their place] and priests and benefited from tax and duty concessions.”⁶⁷ The lure for peasants certainly existed, but the journey from German lands to Transylvania was a difficult one. The *Sachsenspiegel*, a compilation of medieval Saxon laws, contains an illustration of the *Ostsiedlung* with a caption that reads, “German colonists in eastern Europe clear wasteland and build a

⁶² Berend, 208.

⁶³ Simon of Kéza, *Gesta Hungarorum*, ed. and trans. László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999), 163-65.

⁶⁴ Simon of Kéza, 173.

⁶⁵ Laszlo Kontler, *A History of Hungary: Millennium in Central Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 71.

⁶⁶ Transylvanian Saxons are called *Siebenbürger Sachsen* in German, *Erdélyi szászok* in Hungarian, and *Sași* in Romanian. The twelfth-century immigrants mostly came from Luxembourg and the Moselle River region, not Saxony. See Berend, 207.

⁶⁷ Makkai, Mócsy, and Köpeczi, 422.

village.” This image depicts a royal character giving instructions to a character in peasant clothes and a straw hat on the right side, and on the left side it depicts two characters clearing vegetation and another building a wooden structure.⁶⁸ Vladimir Agrigoroaei and Ana-Maria Gruia interpret this image to depict “the foundation of a [Transylvanian] Saxon village [that] lies under the authority of a village headman and of a village counsel, who received the right to settle, dwell and erect buildings from a lord, via a document bearing a shield-type seal. This community is autonomous, for it has its own rights. It has been created into the wilderness, somewhere where no other German did ever boldly go before.”⁶⁹ For the Saxon settlement of Transylvania, or at least the *Ostsiedlung*, to be represented among a compilation of medieval laws like the *Sachsenspiegel*, it had to have been a major movement that captivated the hearts and minds of Germans. The promises of a new life, portrayed in the *Sachsenspiegel* illustration, made the *Ostsiedlung* appealing to the lower classes of German society.

Although many of the Transylvanian Saxons were peasants, merchants, and soldiers, their most important function for the Hungarian king was as miners. Berend writes:

Germans were also important as miners, for example in the silver and gold mines of Radna, and Beszterce in north Transylvania, and the silver mine of Selmecebánya in the first half of the 13th century. In Rimabánya the archbishop of Kalocsa recruited *hospes* settlers to mine gold in 1268, in Gölnicbánya (Szepes county) in the mid 13th century settlers were involved in gold and silver mining, and in the early 14th century in gold mining in Aranyosbánya (Torda county).⁷⁰

By encouraging the settlement of German miners in Transylvania, the Hungarian king boosted the royal treasury and increased his own power. In the 1220s, Andrew II guaranteed in his *Diploma Andreanum* that the Transylvanian Saxons would have access to the salt mines without payment of customs duties.⁷¹ This document also granted the Saxons sole jurisdiction over their land, gave them access to the “forest of the Vlachs and the Pechenegs,” and allowed their merchants to travel, sell, and buy freely throughout

⁶⁸ Vladimir Agrigoroaei and Ana-Maria Gruia, “An Early XIVth Century Depiction of the Transylvanian Saxon *Hospites* in the *Heidelberger* and *Dresdener Sachsenspiegel*?” *Studia Patzinaka*, 4 (2007): 342.

⁶⁹ Agrigoroaei and Gruia, 357.

⁷⁰ Berend, 207.

⁷¹ Curta, 403.

the kingdom.⁷² Thus, the Hungarian king conferred specific rights to the settlers he valued most: foresters, merchants and miners. The *Ostsiedlung* in Transylvania was conducted through peaceful means and was supported by the Hungarian king for secular reasons, to the benefit of the royal treasury.

VI. Degree of Cultural Assimilation

The extent of cultural assimilation affected the success of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania. In Prussia, the indigenous population was either wiped out or forcibly converted and assimilated as a product of the crusades. In contrast, Transylvanian Saxons coexisted with Hungarian nobles, Székelys, and Romanians for centuries. Piskorski states:

From today's perspective, the processes of colonization, assimilation and acculturation seem to coincide. Yet it is necessary to consider them de facto separately, since the colonization of a particular territory lasted only a few decades, while assimilation and acculturation processes were drawn out over centuries and many generations. Their results were relatively independent from the external influx of colonists, and were more often influenced by later political and cultural events in the given territory.⁷³

It is important to note the distinctions between these processes, as colonization, assimilation, and acculturation all occurred in Prussia, but not in Transylvania.

The assimilation of the native population of Prussia into German culture was exhaustive and complete. Christiansen claims that the German participants in the *Ostsiedlung* attempted to remake the Baltic lands in their image, and by 1300, "The makings of a new order were there: in each province there were laity and clergy, lords, peasants and burghers, administrators and subjects—categories that could not have been applied in 1200."⁷⁴ Slavic Prussia was transformed into German Prussia, for the most part, in just a century. Outside of the major population centers, however, the Germans had less success in assimilating the indigenous population because of the *Deutsch-Undeutsch* distinction they maintained in

⁷² Curta, 403.

⁷³ Piskorski, 338.

⁷⁴ Christiansen, 200.

matters of law, business, politics and property.⁷⁵ One example of the unequal *Deutsch-Undeutsch* separation was the German laws that set the *weregild* for murdering a property-owning German colonist as equal to the native Prussian nobility.⁷⁶ Another example of these imbalanced policies that favored Germans was the requirement that applicants for guild membership be of German descent, called the *Deutschtumsparagraph*.⁷⁷ These unequal laws and policies were unfair but effective at guaranteeing the primacy of German culture and language in Prussia during the Middle Ages. By the seventeenth century, the language of the Prussians had died out completely in favor of German.⁷⁸ In contrast, no language death occurred in Transylvania, where German was spoken by the Saxons, Hungarians by the Székelys, and Romanian by the Vlach population.

True cultural assimilation in Transylvania did not occur until the Saxons were incorporated into Hungarian culture in the nineteenth century. The chief reason for this delay was largely that the ethnic groups in Transylvania were each given their own distinct territories. However, some cultural exchange did occur.⁷⁹ The reasons Transylvanian Saxons did not assimilate the indigenous populace into their culture included the language barrier, the relatively closed societies stemming from rigidly defined ethnic territories, and the fact that Saxons were a small minority of the overall population of Transylvania. This cultural pluralism in Transylvania was a far cry from the German dominance that characterized the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and contributed to the disparate effects of the *Ostsiedlung* in these regions.

⁷⁵ Christiansen, 218.

⁷⁶ Bartlett, 211.

⁷⁷ Bartlett, 238.

⁷⁸ Bartlett, 203.

⁷⁹ Transylvanian Saxons maintained German superstitions such as beliefs in giants, goblins and imps, but also incorporated the *pricolici* or *prikulics* from Romanian folklore. See Makkai, Mócsy, and Köpeczi, 528.

VII. Number of Settlers

The difference in the number of German settlers in Prussia and Transylvania was a major determining factor in the lasting effects of the *Ostsiedlung* there. It is impossible to know the exact number of Germans who participated in the *Ostsiedlung* for either region, but estimates have been made. It is known that the Teutonic Order issued about five hundred grants of land to immigrants to settle in Prussia during the first sixty years of the crusade there.⁸⁰ Though this number is small, it does not include all the peasants who were not granted land themselves, but rather only those who worked the land for a knight or lord. Other historians have attempted to estimate the total number of German immigrants. Walter Kuhn estimates the number of German settlers east of the Elbe in the twelfth century to have been 200,000.⁸¹ Robert Bartlett makes a more conservative estimate, saying that there were “tens of thousands of German urban and rural immigrants in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.”⁸² Jan Piskorski disagrees with both assessments, stating that German settlers did not exist in very great numbers because “there is no question of overpopulation in the west and west central European countryside in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.”⁸³ However, both Bartlett and Piskorski put forth the idea that “the colonists migrated eastward by generations, with each successive generation settling further to the east than its predecessor.”⁸⁴ This process was repeated elsewhere, including the western frontier of America.

The sources on the Transylvanian Saxon population in the Middle Ages are much scarcer, although a few do survive. In 1308, a French Dominican monk who visited Hungary commented upon

⁸⁰ Paul W. Knoll, “The Most Unique Crusader State: The Teutonic Order in the Development of the Political Culture of Northeastern Europe during the Middle Ages,” in *The Germans and the East*, ed. Charles W. Ingrao and Franz A.J. Szabo (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2008), 38.

⁸¹ Bartlett, 144.

⁸² Bartlett, 112.

⁸³ Piskorski, 337.

⁸⁴ Piskorski, 340.

the lack of urban development there, saying that “the kingdom looked empty.”⁸⁵ We can also compare the post-industrial populations of the two regions: In 1871, Prussia had a population of about 25 million, whereas the Transylvanian Saxon population at this time was less than a quarter of a million.⁸⁶ Whether the reason for the disparity in their modern population sizes stems from the number of immigrants or the other factors mentioned, the difference in the populations of Prussia and the Saxons of Transylvania is striking.

VIII. Long-Term Effects of German Settlement Beyond the Middle Ages

The lasting effects of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania were disparate, largely due to the difference in the logistics of the conquest and settlement of the two regions. In Transylvania, German settlers wielded considerable soft power that persisted well into the nineteenth century; in Prussia, German hard power was a major player in continental affairs during the same period. Eventually, German settlers were able to turn Prussia into a key power in the eighteenth century, and the state of Prussia led German unification in the mid-nineteenth century. The fate of Germans in Transylvania was quite different—they never accounted for more than about ten percent of the population in Transylvania, where distinct Romanian, Hungarian, and Székely populations outnumbered them.

In the span of five hundred years, Prussia went from a region populated entirely by Slavs to the most powerful German state. The Teutonic Order maintained control over Prussia until its power began to wane and finally subsided in the fifteenth century. The Order’s defeat at the Battle of Grunwald in 1410 to Poland-Lithuania epitomizes its decline. The cities of Prussia banded together in the Thirteen Years’ War and control over western Prussia shifted from the Teutonic Order to the king of Poland with

⁸⁵ Molnár, 48.

⁸⁶ Otto Büsch, Ilja Mieck and Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Handbuch der preussischen Geschichte* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), 42.

the signing of the Second Peace of Thorn in 1466.⁸⁷ The eastern part of Prussia, centered on Königsberg, remained in the hands of the Order until 1525, when it became known as the Duchy of Prussia. In the seventeenth century, Frederick William created a strong military and established an absolute monarchy in Brandenburg-Prussia. Frederick William's successor, Frederick the Great, expanded Prussia into the premier military force on the European continent. Prussia emerged as the leading German state after the Napoleonic Wars and led the unification of Germany in the mid-nineteenth century under Bismarck.

The history of Germans in Transylvania is less successful, and they have had a smaller impact on modern history. In the fifteenth century, Hungarian nobles, Transylvanian Saxons, and Székelys formed a pact known as the *Unio Trium Nationum*, or the Union of the Three Nations, in response to a peasant revolt; this pact was aimed at protecting their rights from possible abridgment by the majority Romanian population.⁸⁸ After the Hungarian defeat at the Battle of Mohács in 1526, Transylvania became an autonomous region under Ottoman control until the Hapsburgs took over in the early eighteenth century. During the reign of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph, Transylvanian Saxons lost their privileged status through the *Ausgleich* and were persecuted to some extent through Magyarization. The Treaty of Trianon following the First World War split up Hungary and gave Transylvania to Romania. During and after the Second World War, many Transylvanian Saxons fled Romania and settled in Germany; today there are very few Germans remaining in Transylvania.

The long-term effects of German settlement varied in Prussia and Transylvania. Prussians were assimilated into German culture, and Prussia eventually became a leading German state and European power, whereas Germans in Transylvania, while wielding significant cultural influence, were never even close to a majority of the population and were eventually expelled from the land.

⁸⁷ Karin Friedrich, *The Other Prussia: Royal Prussia, Poland and Liberty, 1569-1772* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 43-45.

⁸⁸ The *Unio Trium Nationum* formed in 1438 was an alliance of Hungarian Nobles, Székelys and Transylvanian Saxons against peasants and Ottoman raids. The *Unio* also served to exclude serfs, primarily Romanians, but also Hungarians, from Transylvanian politics. See Lendvai, 72.

IX. Conclusion

The scope and durability of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania was dependent upon geography, secular and ecclesiastical support, the method of conquest and settlement, the degree of cultural assimilation, and the number of settlers. Climate and quality of land favored Transylvania, but distance from German lands to the two regions, which favored Prussia, mattered more. The *Ostsiedlung* was fervently supported by the papacy and German secular leaders in Prussia through the Northern Crusades. This consistency and unity of support for the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia ensured the region received a steady stream of German nobles, crusaders, and settlers, who guaranteed a constant and robust colonizing presence in Prussia that would eventually cement the primacy of German culture and language there. The inconsistent support for the *Ostsiedlung* in Transylvania, by contrast, left only economic incentives to attract settlers, and these incentives may not have been enough to outweigh the dangers and hardships of the longer journey to Transylvania. In Prussia, the native, pagan population was initially either killed or forcibly converted to Christianity by Germans, and German culture came to dominate Prussian culture. In Transylvania, Saxons were a minority living in close proximity of Hungarians, Székelys, and Romanians, and many Germans were ultimately assimilated and absorbed into the larger population.

A fitting analogy for the differences between the success of the *Ostsiedlung* in Prussia and Transylvania is illustrated by comparing the permanence of the Teutonic Order's buildings in the two regions. In Transylvania, the Order constructed five castles, which were partly wooden and partly stone, all of which now lie in ruins.⁸⁹ By contrast, in Prussia, the Order built many stone castles, including their headquarters at Marienburg Castle, which still stands and is the world's largest castle.⁹⁰ Just as a

⁸⁹ These castles included the Marienburg Fortress in Feldioara, the Kronstadt Fortress in Braşov, the Schwarzenburg or Black Castle in Codlea and the Rosenau Fortress in Râşnov. Laszlovszky and Soós, 372.

⁹⁰ Leszek Kajzer and Piotr A. Nowakowski, "Remarks on the Architecture of the Teutonic Order's Castles in Prussia," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders*, ed. Zsolt Hunyadi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 453.

structure made of stone survives the ages better than does a wooden one, so, too, did the legacy of the *Ostsiedlung* survive more fully among a fully assimilated German Prussian population than with the minority Transylvanian Saxons.

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