

Towns on the Edge in Medieval Europe: The Social and Political Order of Peripheral Urban Communities from the Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries. Proceedings of the British Academy (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022), eds. Matthew Frank Stevens and Roman Czaja.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

[Figures *at end* for reference: Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4]

Medieval European history can be understood as a process whereby a European political, social and cultural ‘core’, on an axis from England to Italy, colonised a European ‘periphery’ by creating new towns and settlements.¹ In northern Europe this periphery included Wales, Ireland and the shores of the Baltic Sea. This volume contains comparative research produced by an international team of scholars investigating the emergence and development of urban communities within northern European territories subjected to the processes of conquest and colonisation during the high and later Middle Ages. It makes the case that, because of challenges specific to life at the ‘periphery’, the new towns that were founded in these areas developed unique solutions giving rise to equally unique societies that are the historical antecedents of many current or re-emergent civic, regional and national identities in Europe today.

¹ The terms ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ are here used in the sense pioneered by Robert Bartlett. See, for an overview, J. Hudson, ‘The making of Europe: a brief summary’, in J. Hudson and S. Crumplin (eds), *“The Making of Europe”: Essays in Honour of Robert Bartlett* (Leiden, Brill, 2016), pp. 5–10.

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The supposedly universal character of the ‘occidental city’ means that a comparative approach has for many years been regarded as indispensable in researching the medieval European city. However, urban historians of the Middle Ages have rarely risen to the challenge of systematically adopting such an approach. Although a comparative background is set out in the introductions to most analytical surveys of medieval urban life, expressly comparative historical studies of towns in different regions of medieval Europe remain the exception. Where it has been carried out, such comparative research has focused mainly on medieval cities in the Holy Roman Empire and Italy,² and in France and England, as opposed the peripheral regions of Europe.³

The research presented here compares the histories of medieval towns in non-Roman Europe,⁴ a topic which first appeared in urban historiography in the 1980s.⁵ While comparative research on urban development at the peripheries of Latin Europe falls under the broad umbrella of comparative research on urban history, it also has its own specificity in its focus on the transfer of the legal model and social form of the chartered town and of urban life from the European core to its peripheries. Comparative studies undertaken in the 1980s considered the transfer of urban models and forms within the broad frameworks of colonisation, immigration and modernisation (i.e. the *melioratio terrae*, or the ‘amelioration of the land’)

² E. Reinhard and G. Fasoli (eds), *La Città in Italia e in Germania nel Medioevo: Cultura, Istituzioni, Vita Religiosa* (Bologna, Società Editrice Il Mulino, 1984); E. Reinhard, G. Fasoli (eds), *Stadtadel und Bürgertum in den italienischen und deutschen Städten des Spätmittelalters* (Berlin, Duncker&Humblot, 1991); H. Maurer (ed.), *Kommunale Bündnisse Oberitaliens und Oberdeutschlands im Vergleich*, Vorträge und Forschungen 33 (Sigmaringen, Johann Thorbecke Verlag, 1987); E. Piper, *Der Stadtplan als Grundriss der Gesellschaft: Topographie und Sozialstruktur in Augsburg und Florenz um 1500* (Frankfurt, Campus Forschung, 1982).

³ R. H. Hilton (ed.), *English and French Towns in Feudal Society: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁴ Among four regions examined (Livonia, Prussia, Ireland and Wales) only Wales fell within the Roman Empire, but urban life and culture in Wales was completely extinguished in the early Middle Ages and so, as in the other regions, founded de novo by a colonial power in the central and alter Middle Ages.

⁵ H. B. Clarke and A. Simms, ‘Towards a comparative history of urban origins’, in H. B. Clarke and A. Simms (eds), *The Comparative History of Urban Origins in non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford, B.A.R., 1985), pp. 669–714; ; K. Hoare, ‘The evolution of urban oligarchies in Irish towns, 1350–1534’, in L. Klusáková and L. Teulière (eds), *Frontiers and Identities: Cities in Regions and Nations* (Pisa, PLUS-Pisa University Press, 2008), pp. 91–2.

within European countries.⁶ More recently, interest concerning both the European core and peripheries has turned to the social and political context of individual elements of urban life, such as uses of urban space and intraurban group relations, and has focused on the cities and urban networks of Castile, the Holy Roman Empire, Ireland, England and the countries of east-central Europe and of the Baltic Sea region.⁷

Building on this past work, the central hypothesis of the contributors to this volume is that the relationship between the core and periphery of Europe was based not only on the transfer outwards of core models and forms of urban life, but also on their constant modification to suit local conditions and needs within the periphery. Further, drawing inspiration from recent, pathbreaking research examining the Europeanisation of the medieval Baltic Sea region, we

⁶ A. Simms, 'Core and Periphery in Medieval Europe: The Irish Experience in a Wider Context', in W.J. Smyth, K. Whelan and T. Jones Hughes (eds), *Common Ground: Essays on the Historical Geography of Ireland Presented to T. Jones Hughes* (Cork, Cork University Press, 1988), pp. 22–40; P. Erlen, *Europäischer Landesausbau und mittelalterliche deutsche Ostsiedlung. Ein struktureller Vergleich zwischen Südwestfrankreich, den Niederlanden und dem Ordensland Preußen* (Marburg, J.G. Herder-Institut, 1992); W. Schich, 'Stadtwerdung im Raum zwischen Elbe und Oder im Übergang von der slavischen zur deutschen Periode', *Germania Slavica*, 1 (1980), 191–238.

⁷ G. Naegle and J. Á. Solórzano Telechea, 'Geschlechter und Zünfte, principales und común. Städtische Konflikte in Kastilien und dem spätmittelalterlichen Reich', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung*, 41:4 (2014), 561–618; K. Szende, 'Town Foundations in East Central Europe and the New World: the Use of the Grid Plan in a Comparative Perspective', in G. Jaritz and K. Szende (eds), *Medieval East Central Europe in a Comparative Perspective: From Frontier Zones to Lands in Focus* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2016), pp. 157–84; A. Simms, 'Unity in diversity: a comparative analysis of thirteenth-century Killkenny, Kalkar and Sopron', in S. Duffy (ed.), *Princes, Prelates and Poets in Medieval Ireland: Essays in Honour of Katharine Simms* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2013), pp. 107–23; A. Simms, 'Überformung eines keltischen Siedlungsraumes am Rande Europas durch externe Kolonisationsbewegungen', in J. Hagedorn, J. Hovermann and H.J. Nitz (eds), *Gefügemuster der Erdoberfläche. Die genetische Analyse von Reliefkomplexen und Siedlungsräumen. Festschrift zum 42. Deutschen Geographentag* (Göttingen, Goltze, 1979), pp. 261–308; C. A. Empey, 'Conquest and settlement: patterns of Anglo-Norman settlement in North Munster and South Leinster', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 13 (1986), 5–31 at 29–31; B. J. Graham, 'The High Middle Ages: c.1100 to c.1350', in B. J. Graham and L. J. Proudfoot (eds), *An Historical Geography of Ireland* (San Diego, Elsevier, 1993), pp. 60–2; A. Maleszka, 'Town authorities and the separateness of urban church and clergy in medieval Dublin and Toruń', in J. Á. Solórzano Telechea, J. Haemers and R. Czaja (eds), *Exclusión y disciplina social en la ciudad medieval europea* (Logroño, Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2018), pp. 265–80; A. Maleszka, 'Relations between the city and the territorial ruler in the cases of Anglo-Norman Dublin and Altstadt Thorn under the Teutonic Order', in J. Sarnowsky, K. Kwiatkowski, J. Houben, L. Pósán and A. Bárány (eds), *Studies of the Military Orders, Prussia, and Urban History: Essays in Honour of Roman Czaja on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Debrecen, University of Debrecen, 2020), pp. 487–503; Z. Maciakowska, 'Europäische Hafenstädte – ein struktureller Vergleich', in R. Czaja, Z. Noga, F. Opl and M. Scheutz (eds), *Political Functions of Urban Spaces and Town Types Through the Ages / Politische Funktionen Städtischer Räume und Städtetypen im Zeitlichen Wandel* (Cracow-Toruń-Vienna, TNT-Böhlau-Verlag, 2019), pp. 463–86.

test the hypothesis that these processes led to the creation of new models and forms of urban life, suggesting that the ongoing reception and modification of core concepts and innovations at the peripheries reflected the development of unique societies, not simply the imperfect replication of core urban communities.⁸ We posit that the formation of urban communities in medieval Europe was of a polycentric character. That is, as models and forms of urban life spread to the peripheries of the Latin Europe, their modification to suite local conditions and needs by town lords and urban communities was an *active* process of creation, of consciously tailoring to specific circumstances, rather than a *passive* process of absorption.⁹ Thus, where similarities exist in the development of medieval urban communities in peripheral regions of Europe, these resulted not only from the reception of common urban models and forms from the core, but also from similarities in local political, social and economic conditions within different peripheral regions that shaped their modification by town lords and urban communities. For this reason, comparative study of parallel manifestations of similar urban models and forms in different peripheral locations, focusing especially on intersections and dissonances between their parallel modification and application, is a fruitful activity in its own right. We believe strongly that the direct comparison of medieval urban life in different peripheral locations has value as a form of comparative history that exists largely independent of the study of individual core-periphery relationships.

⁸ N. Blomkvist, 'The Europeanisation of the Baltic: a clear case of qualitative change', in W. Eberhard, Ch. Lübke (eds), *The Plurality of Europe: Identities and Spaces: Contributions Made at an International Conference Leipzig, 6–9 June 2007* (Leipzig, Universitätsverlag, 2010), pp. 115–22; N. Blomkvist, '12th–14th Century European expansion and its reception in the Baltic north: summing up the CCC project', in J. Staecker (ed.), *The Reception of Medieval Europe in the Baltic Sea Region: Papers of the XIIth Visby Symposium held at Gotland University, Visby*, Acta Visbyensia, 12 (Visby, Gotland University Press, 2009), pp. 431–84; M. Dygo, 'Europäisierung des Ostseeraums im Hochmittelalter. Anmerkungen am Rande neuer Untersuchungen', in M. Ščavinskas (ed.), *Kultūra – ekonomika – visuomenė: sąveika ir pokyčiai viduramžiais ir ankstyvaisiais naujaisiais laikais Baltijos rytinėje pakrantėje – Culture – Society – Economy: Interaction and Changes in Medieval and Early Modern Times on the Eastern Baltic Coast* (Klaipėda, Klaipėdos Universiteto, 2015), pp. 7–36.

⁹ G. Dilcher, 'Die kommunale Stadtverfassung des Mittelalters als europäisches Modell', in G. Köster, C. Link and H. Lück (eds), *Kulturelle Vernetzung in Europa: das Magdeburger Recht und seine Städte: wissenschaftlicher Begleitband zur Ausstellung "Faszination Stadt"* (Dresden, Sandstein Verlag, 2018), pp. 215–34; G. Dilcher, 'Einheit und Vielheit in Geschichte und Begriff Der europäischen Stadt', in P. Johanek and F.-J. Post (eds), *Vielerei Städte. Der Stadtbegriff* (Köln, Böhlau Verlag, 2004), pp. 13–30.

This volume therefor focuses on the peripheral zones of northern Europe, comprising, in northwest Europe, Ireland and Wales, and, in northeast Europe, Prussia and Livonia (direct comparisons are also made with Franconia and Stockholm, see below). As previous general surveys have suggested, the development of new urban cultures in Ireland and Wales, on the one hand, and in the Slavic lands east of the Elbe and the Baltic Sea region, on the other, had many common features arising primarily from the parallel political expansion by the Anglo-Norman monarchy and nobles in the west and by German princes in the east.¹⁰ The geographical scope of this volume is wider still, and covers the differing cultural, political and economic spheres of Ireland and Wales, and of Prussia and Livonia, as well as those of Franconia and Stockholm as points of direct comparison. Despite the undoubted differences between them, what is important from our point of view is the similar set of conditions under which chartered towns were created in these regions. Excluding Franconia and Stockholm, their development took place as a result of conquest, colonisation and the encounter between various ethnic groups. The inclusion of Franconia, which was not subjected to conquest, is motivated by the fact that the urban model which was established there in the 12th and 13th centuries, and which was associated with the founding and development of differentiated systems of authority (e.g. territorial lord, city council(s), quarters, etc.), was transferred to the Baltic region by the Teutonic Order. The inclusion of Stockholm, which was also not subject to conquest, is motivated by the presence there of a legally privileged German settler community from core cities of the Holy Roman Empire. This placed it in an ambiguous ‘middle’ position as a point of reception, modification and implementation of core models and forms within an unconquered realm which was enmeshed in a social and trade network comprising both core and peripheral urban societies.

¹⁰ For example, P. Clark, *European Cities and Towns 400–2000* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 32.

The research presented in this volume begins in the second half of the 12th century for northwest Europe, and the beginning of the 13th century for northeast Europe, from which time a new form of urban life, related to the chartered town and urban commune rather than to organic and informal points of exchange, emerged at the periphery. It ends in the early 16th century, when the development of the power structures of centralised monarchies began to have an increasing impact on urban life.¹¹ This broad chronological framework enables comparative analysis of these regions' models and forms of urban life, what we here call 'the social and political order', through three stages of development. First was the period of town foundation, especially via charters of liberties, which functioned as a means of establishing and girding the political, military and social dominance of territorial authorities, and of developing the country economically. This was followed by a second period in which urban communes sought to win the greatest possible degree of self-regulation and independence from territorial rulers. Finally, from the 15th century, came a period when self-governing urban elites attempted to limit the participation of citizens in decision-making processes concerning the common good.

The comparative research in this volume focuses on certain features, such as the inter-ethnic rivalries and hostilities examined in chapters 2, 3, 8 and 10, which exerted a decisive influence on the modification and application of core urban models and forms at the periphery. The new social and political order that emerged involved not only the formal and legal framework of the 'urban community' (defined below), but also patterns of behaviour, ideas, social networks and forms of communication – both direct and symbolic – functioning within the community. The semantic scope of the term 'social and political order' thus goes

¹¹ M. Prak, *Citizens Without Nations: Urban Citizenship in Europe and the World, c.1000–1789* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 80.

well beyond the overt and legal characteristics of the formally constituted institutions of urban authority. The social and political order of the urban commune was also shaped by elements associated with communication and interaction between power-holding or socially influential actors, both secular, such as the town councillors discussed in chapters 5, 6 and 9, and ecclesiastical, such as the bishops examined in chapter 9. It was also the product of the relations of those actors with powerful social groups, such as the guilds and fraternities explored in chapter 6, within the ‘urban community’. The ‘urban community’ is understood here as both a legally and socially constituted community, based on formal and informal (but widely held) norms and values, such as the concepts of gender roles or the common good discussed in chapters 4 and 7, as well as notions of group- and self-identification, including those of ethnic group or social stratum considered in chapters 2, 6 and 9.

Historians familiar with the now-extensive body of research on the Jewish communities of core European nations, such as England, France and the Holy Roman Empire, will note the lack of discussion of Jews in this volume. This is due to the *relative* absence of Jews in Ireland, Wales, Prussia and Livonia. While recent and pathbreaking research has now overturned the assumption of past generations that Jews played no part in the formation of these peripheral societies, the balance of our current knowledge still points to the presence only of very small numbers of Jews.¹² In the cases of Ireland and Wales, this nascent Jewish presence seems to have disappeared following the English king’s expulsion of all Jews from England in 1290, and royal charters granted at about this time to new town foundations in Wales, such as Beaumaris, explicitly forbade Jews to dwell within the those boroughs.¹³

¹² D. Stephenson, ‘Jewish presence in, and absence from, Wales in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries’, *Jewish Historical Studies*, 43 (2011), 7–20; A. Matheson, ‘Was there a Jewish presence in medieval Ireland’, *Jewish Historical Studies*, 51 (2020); C. Hess, *The Absent Jews: Kurt Forstreuter and the Historiography of Medieval Prussia* (Oxford, Berghahn, 2017).

¹³ G. Usher, ‘The foundation of an Edwardian borough: the Beaumaris charter 1296’, *Transactions of the Anglesey Archaeological Society* (1967), 1–16 at 5.

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Much the same story of limited evidence and an as yet emergent modern historiography may be told with respect to the Russian presence in Baltic towns.¹⁴ In this context, of a general lack of documentary sources regarding Jews, Russians and other numerically minor ethnic groups, the research presented in this volume focuses overwhelmingly on the main colonial and native actors in each region under study.

Research themes.

If a comparative analysis is to be productive, it must focus on selected groups of more-or-less directly comparable concrete features.¹⁵ In order to investigate effectively the social and political order of towns on the European periphery, we focus here on three key themes, each of which is discussed in one of the three main parts of this volume, each part, in turn, is comprised of three comparative essays. The first theme of this volume is discussed in part I on ‘the formation of the community’ of inhabitants. At the periphery of Europe this process of formation normally involved not only the settling of rights and responsibilities on new colonial and native arrivals into the urban space but also the establishment of functioning social and political relations between different ethnic, linguistic and even gender groups. The second theme of this volume is the open-ended process of the ‘normalisation of social life and social disciplining’ within towns which is examined in part II. This was usually achieved by the use of civic ordinances which sought to sustain the community’s internal structures, including those of power, wealth, gender and ethnicity. The concept of ‘social disciplining’ has been a topic of major interest in German-speaking historiography since the 1980s.¹⁶ The

¹⁴ A. Selart, ‘Russians in Livonian towns in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries’, in D. Keene, B. Nagy and K. Szende (eds), *Segregation – Integration – Assimilation: Religious and Ethnic Groups in the Medieval Towns of Central and Eastern Europe* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009), pp. 33–35.

¹⁵ D. Denecke, ‘Comparative approaches in the historico-topographical analysis of towns and cities’, in A. Simms and H. B. Clarke (eds), *Lords and Towns in Medieval Europe: the European Historic Towns Atlas Project* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2015), p. 38.

¹⁶ H. Brand, S. Rabeler and H. von Seggern, ‘Gelebte Normen im urbanen Raum? Zur Einführung’, in H. Brand, S. Rabeler and H. von Seggern (eds), *Gelebte Normen im urbanen Raum?* (Hilversum, Uitgeverij Verloren, 2014), pp. 9–13.

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essays in part II focus on the vertical relationship between the superior authority of a community, whether this was the town lord or a self-governing elite, which promulgated the civic ordinances by which townspeople were expected to live, and the less- or disempowered members of the municipality whose everyday experiences were shaped by the process of enforcing those rules, i.e. by ‘social disciplining’. Such civic ordinances did not only seek to regulate the lived reality of town life but also to create a system of norms, understood behaviours and social images that would be part of the concept of a municipality as it was conceived of by the superior authority. Finally, part III of the volume turns its attention to . ‘peace making and peace keeping’ within the community.¹⁷ Ideas concerning one’s personal peace, secure possession of property and enjoyment of urban rights were central to medieval communal life. Here we examine both internal peace mechanisms, such as the organisation and implementation of city watches and quarters, and the external mechanism of petitioning by municipalities seeking redress of community concerns by the town lord, or king who was seen as the guarantor of their municipal rights, prosperity and security.

The peripheral regions under study.

Prussia and Livonia.

The formation of the urban landscape in Prussia and Livonia was determined by two main premises: the idea of the crusades and the creation of new self-governing territories. The Teutonic Knights began building their state on the Baltic Sea by conquering the district of Kulm Land, lying in the bend of the River Vistula roughly between the modern cities of Thorn and Kulm (see Figure 1), between 1231 and 1234, which they had received from

¹⁷ J. Rogge, ‘Pax urbana. The use of law for the achievement of political goals’, in J. W. Armstrong and E. Frankot (eds), *Culture of Law in Urban Northern Europe, Scotland and its Neighbours c.1350–c.1650* (London/ New York, Routledge, 2021), pp. 139–53; G. Dilcher, ‘Bürgerliche Vergemeinschaftung und friedenswahrende Verrechtlichung: die Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Stadt als historisches Experiment’, in J. Calliess (ed.), *Wodurch und wie konstituiert sich Frieden?: das zivilisatorische Hexagon auf dem Prüfstand* (Rehburg-Loccum, Evangelische Akademie, 1997), pp. 39–52.

Conrad, Duke of Piast, ruler of neighbouring Masovia. Over the next 50 years, the troops of the Teutonic Order, supported by Polish princes and by crusaders from the Holy Roman Empire, conquered Kulm Land and extensive adjoining areas inhabited by pagan Prussians. The process of urbanisation and colonisation of the country was interrupted by two Prussian uprisings, in the years 1242–9 and 1260–83. The last stage of the formation of the Prussian State of the Teutonic Knights was the conquest of Pomerelia (1308–9), which was part of Poland until the beginning of the 14th century.¹⁸ In 1243, Prussia was divided into four bishoprics, after which the bishops and cathedral chapters would obtain secular lordship over a third part of the territory of their diocese. Hence the bishops and cathedral chapters became independent territorial authorities within the new dioceses of Kulm Land, Pomesania, Warmia and Sambia. These ecclesiastical lords recognised the political and military supremacy of the Teutonic Order, but would remain independent in the policies they adopted towards their towns.¹⁹

From the end of the 13th century, Prussia was subjected to processes of territorialisation, the main elements of which were colonisation by German peasant cultivators and townsmen, and the development of martial and administrative structures of territorial authority. In the second half of the 14th century, the monastic state reached its full state of development and maximum geographical extent. During this period the territories belonging to the Teutonic Order and Prussian bishops had an area of about 58,000 km². At the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, the monastic state was inhabited by a population of about 465,000–495,000,

¹⁸ M. Biskup and G. Labuda, *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen. Wirtschaft – Gesellschaft – Staat – Ideologie* (Osnabrück, Fibre Verlag, 2000), pp. 118–19; M. Dygo, 'Początki budowy władztwa zakonu krzyżackiego (1226–1309)', in M. Biskup and R. Czaja (eds), *Państwo zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach. Władza i społeczeństwo* (Warszawa, PWN, 2008), pp. 79–92.

¹⁹ A. Radziwiński, 'Church divisions in Prussia', in R. Czaja and A. Radziwiński, *The Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia, the Political and Ecclesiastical Structures 13th–16th c.* (Toruń, TNT / Böhlau Verlag, 2015), pp. 109–44.

including roughly 145,000 ethnic Prussians, 150,000–170,000 Slavs/Poles and 170,000–180,000 Germans.²⁰

Prior to the arrival of the Teutonic Order in 1231, Prussia contained no large or legally constituted urban centres analogous to the towns and cities found in neighbouring German or Polish territories. The establishment of territorial authority was the most important factor driving the urbanisation of Prussia, between 1231 and the 1280s. During this period towns were founded together with castles; they constituted pillars of defensive organisation as well as jumping-off points for further conquests.²¹ With the end of military conquest and the commencement of rural colonisation by peasant cultivators, the most important factor driving development of the urban network became the need to creating a retail and manufacturing base to complement the rural economy. To this end, the period from the end of the 13th century to the 1360s was the most intensive phase of urbanisation in Prussia, and 65 towns were granted a foundation charter. In total, by the mid-15th century, the Prussian State of the Teutonic Order would contain 96 towns; of these, 72 were founded by the Teutonic Order and 24 by bishops and cathedral chapters.²²

The majority of Prussian towns were granted a foundation charter outlining the burghers' rights and responsibilities based on that granted by the Teutonic Order in 1233 to Kulm and

²⁰ R. Wenskus, 'Das Ordensland Preußen als Territorialstaat des 14. Jahrhunderts', in R. Wenskus, *Ausgewählte Aufsätze zum frühen und preußischen Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1986), pp. 317–52; M. Biskup, 'Etniczno-demograficzne przemiany Prus krzyżackich w rozwoju osadnictwa w średniowieczu (o tak zwanym nowym plemieniu Prusaków)', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, 98,2 (1991), 45–67

²¹ R. Czaja, 'Polish town plans as expressions of political and economic power', in A. Simms and H. B. Clarke (eds), *Lords and Towns in Medieval Europe: the European Historic Towns Atlas Project* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2015), pp. 235–54; T. Jasiński, 'Die Rolle des Deutschen Ordens bei der Städtegründungen in Preußen im 13. Jahrhundert', in U. Arnold (ed.), *Stadt und Orden. Das Verhältnis des Deutschen Ordens zu den Städten in Livland, Preussen und im Deutschen Reich*, QSGDO, 44 (Marburg, N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1993), pp. 91–111.

²² M. Biskup, 'Entwicklung des Netzes der altpreußischen Städte bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 53 (1986), 5–27; R. Czaja, 'Towns and Urban Space in the State of the Teutonic Order in Prussia', in R. Czaja, A. Radziński (eds) *The Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia. The Political and Ecclesiastical Structures 13th–16th C.* (Toruń, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Böhlau Verlag, 2015), pp. 91, 100, 103–104.

Thorn, its first towns in Prussia, although this ‘Kulm law’ was based on the older law of Magdeburg in the Holy Roman Empire. Alternatively, seven Prussian towns adopted the legal system of Lübeck. As early as the 14th century, a group of so-called ‘large towns’ (a.k.a. ‘large cities’) emerged among the Prussian towns. This group was eventually composed of seven urban centres: Kulm, the Old Town of Thorn (after 1454, simply Thorn), the Old Town of Elbing (after 1478, simply Elbing), the Old Town of Königsberg, the Old Town of Braunsberg, the Main Town of Danzig (after 1455, simply Danzig) and, from the 15th century, Kneiphof (Königsberg).²³ These cities were distinguished not only by their comparatively large physical area and population, but also by their significant role in the political life of the country whilst their participation in Hanseatic trade (i.e. through their membership of the Hanseatic League) enhanced their economic importance. Nevertheless, of these seven towns, only the Main Town of Danzig, with about 21,000 inhabitants in the mid-15th century, could be considered large within a broader European context, with the populations of the others being of middling rank at best: Thorn with 10,000 inhabitants, Elbing with 9,000, Königsberg with about 8,000, Kulm with around 5,700, and Braunsberg with 4,000. The population of the majority of Prussian small towns ranged between 200 and 400 residents.²⁴ A second group of Prussian towns were the so called ‘new towns’, founded frequently in close proximity to existing large trade centres (see Figures 11, 13, 14 and 15) but which were spatially and legally separate from them. These included the New Town of Thorn (1264), the New Town of Elbing (1247) and the New Town of Braunsberg. Further, two new towns were founded in close proximity to Königsberg, namely Löbenicht (1299–

²³ K. Neitmann, ‘Die "Hauptstädte" des Ordenslandes Preußen und ihre Versammlungstage. Zur politischen Organisation und Repräsentation der preußischen Städte unter der Landesherrschaft des Deutschen Ordens’, *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 19 (1992), 125–58.

²⁴ H. Samsonowicz, *Późne Średniowiecze miast nadbałtyckich* (Warszawa, PWN, 1968), pp. 73–108; H. Ammann, ‘Wie groß war die mittelalterliche Stadt?’ *Studium Generale*, 9 (1956), 503–4; D. Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City, 1300–1500: A History of Urban Society in Europe* (London, Longman, 1997), pp. 51–2, 63, 70).

1300) and Kneiphof (1327), and to the Main Town of Danzig, namely the Old Town of Danzig (1377) and the New Town of Danzig (1380).

Subsequent wars with Poland and Lithuania, and conflict with the Prussian Estates, led to the decline of the territorial extent and political authority of the Teutonic Order. As a result, the political aspirations of burghers and noblemen intensified, especially after the defeat of the Teutonic Order in its war against Poland and Lithuania (1409–11). The uprising of the Prussian Estates of 1454 developed into the Thirteen Years' War, which ended in 1466. During this time, the decline of the authority of the Teutonic Order enabled the councils of The Old Town of Thorn and the Main Town of Danzig to incorporate their neighbouring new towns. The Old Town of Elbing also attempted this in 1459 but was unsuccessful until 1478, whilst the towns at Königsberg and Braunsberg were merged only in 1724 and 1772, respectively.²⁵ The Thirteen Years' War was concluded by the second Peace of Thorn and transference of the western part of Prussia, including the largest Prussian cities, namely, Thorn, Danzig and Elbing, to the Polish monarchy. In 1525, Grand Master of the Teutonic Order Albrecht von Hohenzollern agreed, in the Treaty of Cracow, to the secularisation of the monastic state and its transformation into the secular Duchy of Prussia as a fief of the Polish king.

The conquest of Livonia began with the founding of the city of Riga by Bishop Albert in 1201, near the mouth of the Daugava River on the Baltic Sea (see Figure 4). The crusade against the Finno-Ugric tribes (the Estonians and Livonians) and against the Baltic tribes (the

²⁵ A. Czacharowski, 'Die Gründung der „Neustädte“ im Ordensland Preussen', *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, 108 (1990), 1–12; Z. H. Nowak, 'Neustadtgründungen des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen. Entstehung, Verhältnisse zu den Altstädten, Ende der Eigenständigkeit', in U. Arnold (ed.), *Stadt und Orden. Das Verhältnis des Deutschen Ordens zu den Städten in Livland, Preußen und im Deutschen Reich*, QSGDO, 44 (Marburg, N.G.Elwert, 1993), pp. 129–40.

Courlands, Semigallians, Selpnians, Lattgallians) involved knights and burghers from northern Germany, merchants from Gotland and the king of Denmark, who began the conquest of northern Estonia in 1219. The conquest of Livonia led to the formation of a complex political structure. The archbishop of Riga, the bishop of Dorpat, the bishop of Osilia (Saaremaa) and the bishop of Courland each exercised control over his own territories. The military order of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword, founded in 1202, also strove to create its own area of territorial control, which was incorporated into that of the Teutonic Order in 1237. Under the treaty of Stensby (1238), the Danish monarchy retained control over northern Estonia. More than a century later, after the outbreak of an Estonian uprising, the Danish king sold his territory in 1346 to the Teutonic Order. The political borders established at that time then survived without major changes until 1561.

The territory of the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order covered an area of about 67,000 km², while the bishops' territories covered 41,000 km².²⁶ The population of the whole of Livonia at the beginning of the 16th century is estimated at about 650,000–700,000, with the territory corresponding to modern Estonia then having about 250,000–300,000 inhabitants and that corresponding to modern Latvia then having about 400,000 inhabitants. Unlike rural Prussia, rural Livonia was not colonised by German peasant cultivators, leaving the native population predominant. The combined German and Swedish colonial minority in Livonia did not exceed 10 per cent of the population and was focused in the towns (see below).²⁷

²⁶ M. Biskup, 'Territorial Governance in Medieval Livonia and its Extent', in R. Czaja and A. Radzimiński (eds), *The Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia: the Political and Ecclesiastical Structures 13th–16th c.* (Toruń, TNT/, Böhlau, Verlag, 2015), pp. 176–8; I. Misāns, 'Städtelandschaft des mittelalterlichen Livlands', in W. Wüst and K. Wolf (eds), *Die süddeutsche Städtelandschaft – ein interregionaler Vergleich* (Berlin, Peter Lang, 2021), p. 445.

²⁷ A. Selart, (ed.), *Eesti ajalugu, vol. II: Eesti keskaeg* (Tartu, Ülikool, 2012), pp. 168–70; W. Schlau (ed.), *Sozialgeschichte der baltischen Deutschen* (Köln, Mare Balticum, 1997), p. 11.

In Livonia, as in Prussia, the land was unurbanised before colonisation and the foundation of towns served to strengthen the territorial authority of the bishops and of the Teutonic Order. All Livonian towns, except Riga, were founded around castles and so helped strengthen the defensive potential of the country while also serving as centres of administration and of economic development. The most important factor driving the development of Livonian towns was their role as points of communication and exchange in long-distance Baltic trade. Most of the towns were located along waterways or land routes leading ultimately to Ruthenia. In Livonia – in contrast to Prussia – urbanisation was not linked with rural colonisation, and so the level of urbanisation in medieval Livonia was lower than that of the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. By the beginning of the 16th century, only 19 towns had been granted municipal law, of which seven were founded by the Teutonic Order, three by the king of Denmark and eight by the bishops, while one (Straupe), was a seignorial foundation of the von Rosen family, vassals of the archbishop of Riga. This process of urbanisation was most intense between 1201 and the beginning of the 14th century, during which time 12 of the 19 towns were founded with the remaining seven being granted privileges over the course of the next century. Two systems of municipal law were developed in Livonia. Danish-founded towns in northern Estonia – Reval, Wesenberg and Narwa – adopted Lübeck law, whilst the other centres applied Riga's town law. The urban network in Livonia was supplemented by about 50 craft and market settlements near castles, so-called 'Hakelwerk' settlements, which did not have town charters.²⁸

²⁸ R. Czaja, 'Livonian towns from the 13th to the 16th century', in R. Czaja and A. Radzimiński (eds), *The Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia*, pp. 230, 246, 247, 250; I. Pöltsam-Jürjo, 'Grundzüge des livländischen Städtewesens im Mittelalter', in H. Hein-Kircher and I. Misāns (eds), *Stadtgeschichte des Baltikums oder baltische Stadtgeschichte? Annäherungen an ein neues Forschungsfeld zur baltischen Geschichte*, Tagungen zur Ostmitteleuropaforschung, 33 (Marburg, Verlag Herder-Institut, 2015), pp. 120–4; A. Selart, 'Die kleinen Städte Livlands und ihre Rolle in der oder für die Hanse', in J. Kreem and J. Sarnowsky (eds), *„Hansisch“ oder „nicht-hansisch“. Das Beispiel der kleinen Städte und Livlands in der Hanse* (Wismar, Callidus, 2019), pp. 23–42.

The leading economic and political role in Livonia was played by the three oldest cities, Riga, Reval and Dorpat, which engaged in Hanseatic trade. From the mid-14th century, Livonian cities organised diets, or assemblies of delegates, at which they discussed political matters and worked out common positions before sending delegates to the diet of the Hanseatic League.²⁹ The largest city of Livonia was Riga, with a population about 12,000 residents in the beginning of the 16th century. The populations of Reval and Dorpat had grown by this time to 6,700 and 5,000, respectively. Most small towns were inhabited by no more than a few hundred people. The social structure of Livonian cities was distinguished by significant ethnic diversity. In Riga, more than half of the residents were German, while the native population amounted to about 33 per cent, the residue including small numbers of Russians. In Reval, Estonians and Germans each made up about 40 per cent of the population, and Swedes about 20 per cent. On a relative basis, native inhabitants typically comprised a larger share of the urban population of smaller towns than of larger ones.³⁰

Wales and Ireland.

Like Prussia and Livonia, Wales was unurbanised before its medieval colonisation. Early medieval Wales was divided into a number of competing kingdoms which, while sometimes drawn into conflicts beyond Wales driven by English political infighting, had never been subjected to widespread, durable English conquest. Following the conquest of England by William, duke of Normandy, in 1066, William divided control of his realm between his supporters, creating three earldoms along the Welsh borderlands, or 'March', the

²⁹ N. Angermann, 'Die Stellung der livländischen Städte in der hansischen Gemeinschaft', *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, 113 (1995), 111–25; I. Misāns, 'Riga, Dorpat und Reval im Spannungsfeld zwischen den wendischen und preussischen Städten vom Ende des 14. bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts', in B. Dybaś and D. Makiła (eds), *Prusy i Inflanty między średniowieczem a nowożytnością: państwo – społeczeństwo – kultura: zbiór studiów* (Toruń, TNT, 2003), pp. 29–43.

³⁰ Czaja, 'Livonian towns', pp. 247–8.

southernmost of which was given to William fitz Osbern, who was created earl of Hereford in 1067. Fitz Osbern was seignorial lord of the town of Breteuil in Normandy, and, after making the city of Hereford his English power-base, he granted immigrant French burgesses there a new town charter based on the town-law of Breteuil.³¹ In about 1067, he conquered the Welsh district of Gwent, between the Rivers Wye and Usk in southeast Wales, where he founded the towns of Monmouth and Chepstow (then called 'Striguil').³² These would form the nuclei of sections of Welsh territory under seignorial control that came to be understood as being beyond the scope of the king of England's royal administrative and judicial structures, as 'marcher lordships'.³³ Fitz Osbern's actions would be repeated frequently over the following two centuries or so, leading to the creation of about 50 marcher lordships in the south and west of Wales which covered as much as 60 per cent of the country of Wales, and the creation of around 70 seignorial boroughs there, a large proportion of which enjoyed 'Hereford law' (see Figure 2), as adapted from that of Breteuil.³⁴ However, despite this colonisation by Anglo-Norman seignorial lords, the kings of England themselves remained distinctly disinterested in the conquest and urbanisation of Wales before the late-13th century (see below).

The urbanisation of Wales involved the creation of about 105 towns that were founded as a result of two waves of conquest, separated by a period of (mostly) peaceful enhancement of conquered lands through urbanisation. The first, Norman wave of conquest-fuelled urbanisation generally comprised private initiatives. It began in 1067 and continued with

³¹ K. Lilley, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages, 1000–1450* (Houndmills, Palgrave, 2002), pp. 79–80.

³² T. Hopkins, 'The towns, in R. A. Griffiths (ed.), *The Gwent County History, Volume 2: the Age of the Marcher Lords* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2008), p. 115.

³³ For an introduction, see, P. Hume, *The Welsh Marcher Lordships, vol. I: Central and North* (Eardisley, Logaston Press, 2021), pp. 1–9. Specifically, on these Gwent lordships, see, P. Courtney, 'The marcher lordships: origins, descent and organization', in Griffiths (ed.), *The Gwent County History*, pp. 47–69.

³⁴ Lordships sometimes were merged or divided, and not all borough foundations were successful or have left borough charters for investigation. On the spread of Hereford law see, Lilley, *Urban Life*, p. 80–83.

rapidly diminishing intensity until about 1150, resulting in about 26 new towns.³⁵ Afterwards, political disunity in neighbouring England, the redirection of resources to the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland (see below) and a degree of Welsh political recovery slowed the pace of conquest.³⁶ The only notable royal foundation was the borough of Carmarthen, granted privileges by Henry I in 1109 after he took possession of a fortification that had been created by the Norman adventurer William fitz Baldwin. Associated with control of extensive surrounding lands, Carmarthen became the crown's political and administrative hub in south Wales.³⁷ Between the 1170s and the late-13th century a steady trickle of towns was founded, typically near old and newly fortified sites, adding about another 49 mostly seignorial boroughs. The second wave of conquest-fuelled urbanisation took place in the reign of Edward I (r. 1272–1307), who in two wars, in 1277 and 1282–3, would conquer the rump of native Wales. The result of this second wave was the creation of 30 new planned towns.³⁸ A few fledgling urban communities may have been recently initiated by the Prince of Wales prior to the English conquest, most notably Llanfaes on the at Island of Anglesey;³⁹ Edward I created about a dozen new chartered boroughs, often at or near these sites, in lands he retained as a new royal Principality of Wales. He also parcelled out conquered lands to royal favourites, who created new marcher lordships and founded nearly 20 more towns. The final royal foundation of a new borough in medieval Wales would be made by Edward III, in 1334 at Bala.

Wales has an area of about 20,700 km², much of which is covered with low mountains, over half of it being at elevations of over 180 meters, above which medieval wheat could not

³⁵ I. Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (Chichester, Phillimore, 1983), pp. 7–11.

³⁶ R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales, 1063–1415* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 216–51.

³⁷ R. A. Griffiths, 'Carmarthen', in R. A. Griffiths (ed.) *Boroughs of Medieval Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1978), p. 138

³⁸ Soulsby, *The Towns*, p. 13.

³⁹ See, A. D. Carr, *Medieval Anglesey*, 2nd edn (Llangefni, Anglesey Antiquarian Society, 2011), pp. 185–210.

readily be grown and arable agriculture of even inferior crops, such as oats, was challenging.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, Wales saw substantial colonisation by English peasant cultivators. This was the combined product of the political will of the marcher lords who were seeking quickly to repopulate, pacify and profit from their Welsh conquests by compelling or encouraging English immigration to Wales, together with the ‘push factor’ of land hunger in England as the population there trebled between c.1066 and c.1300. Hence, by the early 14th century, Wales had a population of no more than 300,000, comprised of perhaps 75,000 English and 225,000 Welsh.⁴¹

Geographically, urbanisation in Wales was highly uneven, focused disproportionately on the coastal plain and in the river basins, and in close proximity to the best grain-growing areas settled by English colonists. In the early 14th century, the 105 or so mostly small towns, housed about 20 per cent of Wales’ population.⁴² The two largest settlements, the royal borough Carmarthen and seignorial borough of Cardiff, each had a population of about 2,000.⁴³ Six more towns had populations of over 1,000: Holt, Cowbridge, Haverfordwest, Chepstow, Usk, Newport and Monmouth. Together, these eight largest towns accounted for 20 per cent of Wales’s townspeople. Typically coastal and riverine ports, or situated close to the English border, their inhabitants were mostly English.⁴⁴ The remaining towns of Wales usually contained just a few hundred people and a comparatively large proportion of Welsh inhabitants, amounting even to a large Welsh majority in more interior locations.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ M. F. Stevens, *The Economy of Medieval Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2019), pp. 23–5.

⁴¹ Stevens, *The Economy*, pp. 29–38.

⁴² Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales*, pp. 1–28;

⁴³ Stevens, *The Economy*, pp. 64–5.

⁴⁴ Stevens, *The Economy*, pp. 63–3.

⁴⁵ M. F. Stevens, ‘Anglo-Welsh towns of the early fourteenth century: a survey of urban origins, property-holding and ethnicity’, in H. Fulton (ed.), *Urban Culture in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 141, table 6.1.

Natural and man-made catastrophes diminished the urban network of late medieval Wales.

The greatest natural catastrophe was the plague of 1348–9, along with later outbreaks, which, while causing comparatively light mortalities in Prussia and Livonia, reduced the population of England and Wales alike by as much as 50 per cent.⁴⁶ Urban populations in Wales now inevitably fell but, perhaps even more importantly, the reduction of the rural population in relation to a relatively fixed number of towns meant that urban economies particularly suffered. The plague also reduced land-hunger in England, removing the incentive for English peasants to immigrate to Wales in search of either land or new urban opportunities.

The man-made catastrophe was the Welsh rebellion of Owain Glyndwr, 1400–15, which resulted in the partial or complete destruction by fire of 40 towns in Wales, many of which would never fully recover.⁴⁷ At the best of times, medieval towns and cities suffered from relatively high mortality resulting from their cramped and often unsanitary living conditions, meaning that they needed constant in-migration simply to maintain their numbers.⁴⁸ With the cessation of English immigration, this need for human capital resulted in a long-term increase in the proportion of the urban population that was of Welsh ethnicity. Enhancing this process, in 1485 the quarter-Welsh Henry VII would take the English crown by force, with broad Welsh support, whilst in 1536 his son, Henry VIII, issued the ‘Act of Union’, which joined Wales to England, extinguished the marcher lordships in favour of new counties and abolished legal distinctions between the Welsh and English populations that had previously disadvantaged or disallowed Welshmen from enjoying urban the franchise of some towns

⁴⁶ W. Rees., ‘The Black Death in Wales’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3 (1920), 115–35.

⁴⁷ Souldby, *The Towns*, pp. 25–6; R. A. Griffiths, ‘Wales and the Marches’, in D. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 1, 600–1540 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 681–714.

⁴⁸ On urban health and mortality see, C. Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies: Communal Health in Late Medieval English Towns and Cities* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 62–77.

(see, this volume, chapter 2).⁴⁹ Thus, whilst in 1295 there is no evidence of Welsh burgesses at Cardiff, by 1542 at least 35 per cent of the town's burgesses were Welsh.⁵⁰

The colonisation and urbanisation of Ireland by Anglo-Norman adventures, from 1169, is best understood in relation to the experience of Wales, although with some key differences. Unlike Wales, Prussia or Livonia, Ireland had experience substantial early medieval colonisation by Vikings, resulting in at least five substantial centres of trade, at Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Wexford, although these were 'primitive, limited' sites dissimilar from the chartered, legally constituted towns of the core European model (see Figure 3).⁵¹ Pre-conquest Ireland, like Wales, was divided into a number of competing kingdoms, and the initial invasion of Ireland in 1169 was undertaken at the invitation of the deposed king of Leinster, Diarmait mac Murchada. It was mainly prosecuted by marcher lords of Wales, most notably Richard de Clare, lord of the marcher lordship of Pembroke, to whom mac Murchada had promised Wexford, among other things. The English king, Henry II, was keen to avoid the division of Ireland into lordships beyond his control, as had happened in Wales, and in 1171 brought his own invading force to Ireland.⁵² In part, he justified this intervention by seeking and receiving papal permission to do so as a means to help to reform the Irish church, a mission carrying crusading overtones.⁵³ Henry II declared the main Hiberno-Norse settlements to be crown possessions, giving Dublin urban privileges based on those of Bristol in 1171, while individual Norman invaders soon created seignorial boroughs based on

⁴⁹ H. T. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1915), pp. 119–33.

⁵⁰ R. A. Griffiths, 'The medieval boroughs of Glamorgan and medieval Swansea: I. The boroughs of the lordship of Glamorgan', in T. B. Pugh (ed.), *Glamorgan County History, vol. III: the Middle Ages* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1971), p. 343; D. G. Walker, 'Cardiff', in Griffiths (ed.), *Boroughs of Medieval Wales*, p. 126.

⁵¹ B. J. Graham, 'Urban genesis in early medieval Ireland', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 13 (1987), 3–16 at 3.

⁵² R. Frame, *Colonial Ireland, 1169–1369* (Dublin, Helicon, 1981), p. 11.

⁵³ Frame, *Colonial Ireland*, pp. 13–14; C. Veach, 'Henry II and the ideological foundations of Angevin rule in Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, 42 (2018), 1–25.

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Hereford law, as at Drogheda (1194) and Dungarven (1215).⁵⁴ This imbedded both the customs of Bristol and Hereford as much-copied models of town law in Ireland. Henry II also reserved to the crown some Irish conquests while confirming the more-or-less private lordships of Meath and Leinster. Over the following decades more detailed crown-administrative arrangements – with Ireland becoming a ‘lordship’ of the crown – and further independent seignorial conquests were accompanied by substantial immigration to Ireland by English and Welsh peasant cultivators. Ultimately, royal and seignorial efforts would result in the crown’s so-called ‘four obedient shires’, focused on the city of Dublin – Kildare, Louth, Meath and Dublin – and the seven so-called ‘great liberties’ – Trim and Kells (the successor liberties to Meath); Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny and Wexford (the successor liberties to Leinster); and Ulster. While the great liberties of Ireland lacked, in theory, the complete independence of royal oversight enjoyed by the Welsh marcher lordships, and powerful kings such as Edward I could challenge their rights to have and administer franchises such as town markets, for most of the later Middle Ages those who possessed the great liberties did as they pleased, to the consternation of the king’s officials in Dublin.⁵⁵ This meant that, as in Wales, large numbers of chartered towns in Ireland were seignorial foundations.

Critically, however, the conquest of Ireland was never completed and substantial areas, particularly in the west of the island, remained under native control throughout the Middle Ages. Moreover, the area of Anglo-Norman – later ‘English’ – control shrank dramatically from the later-14th century. The area of Ireland is 84,421 km², but probably less than half of that was typically under effective colonial control, and considerably less in the 15th century. The ethnic composition of the colony in Ireland is inscrutable. Ireland probably had a

⁵⁴ Lilley, *Urban Life*, pp. 82–3.

⁵⁵ B. Hartland, ‘The Liberties of Ireland in the reign of Edward I’, in M. Prestwich (ed.), *Liberties and Identities in Medieval British Isles* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2008), pp. 199–202.

population of no more than 1,000,000 around the year 1300, with the eastern half of the island containing the heart of the English colony being more densely populated than the western half.⁵⁶ The proportion of the colony's population comprised of non-native settlers is also largely unknowable and would have varied greatly from location to location. But in the early 14th century it likely was no more than 25 per cent, that being the proportion made up by non-natives in Wales, and from the later-14th century the non-native share of the colony's population was progressively eroded by the in-migration of ethnically Irish persons into the English colony.⁵⁷

The exact number of towns founded in Anglo-Norman Ireland is again difficult to determine, and depends partly on the definition of a 'town' employed.⁵⁸ Generally, scholars distinguish between three types of town: the large maritime and/or riverine cities, or 'mercantile towns', approximately 25 of which were granted a charter, some having evolved from the main proto-urban Hiberno-Norse centres (e.g. Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Limerick); smaller towns, or 'peasant towns', with a clear urban character, approximately 77 of which are known (e.g. Kinsale, Adare, Athboy, Kells, Tipperary); and rural boroughs, or more correctly 'market settlements', approx. 160 of which were established (e.g. Shandon, Fayth, Portumna, Slane, Bannow), which usually had a borough charter but were otherwise lacking in urban characteristics.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ B. M. S. Campbell, 'Benchmarking medieval economic development: England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, c. 1290', *EcHR*, 61 (2008), 896–945 at 927.

⁵⁷ We have more evidence of the settlement process and ethnic structure in Wales. Stevens, *The Economy*, pp. 29–38; On the proposition that native persons were always in the majority in the colony, and how their share of the population increased, see, S. Booker, *Cultural Exchange and Identity in Late Medieval Ireland: the English and Irish of the Four Obedient Shires* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), pp. 45–59.

⁵⁸ See the discussion on the origins and definition of towns in Ireland: J. Bradley, 'Planned Anglo-Norman towns in Ireland', in H. B. Clarke and A. Simms (eds), *The Comparative History of Urban Origins in Non-Roman Europe: Ireland, Wales, Denmark, Germany, Poland and Russia from the 9th to the 13th Century*, vol. 2 (Oxford, BAR, 1985), pp. 417–9; B. J. Graham, 'Early medieval Ireland: settlement as an indicator of economic and social transformation c. 500–1000', in B. J. Graham and L. J. Proudfoot (eds), *An Historical Geography of Ireland* (San Diego, Elsevier, 1993), pp. 29–31.

⁵⁹ See, B. J. Graham, 'The definition and classification of medieval Irish towns', *Irish Geography*, 21 (1988), 20–32.

In the early 14th century, the largest urban community in Ireland was Dublin, with a population of between 10,000 and 20,000.⁶⁰ Waterford had a population of between 5,000 and 10,000.⁶¹ Kilkenny, Drogheda, Cork, Limerick and New Ross each had a population of between 2,000 and 5000.⁶² All other Irish towns had less than 2,000 inhabitants, most with just a few hundred.⁶³ The unresolved state of war between the native Irish and the crown hindered Irish migration and integration into towns. The descendants of the original Hiberno-Norse population of Dublin and Waterford formed diminishing minority populations there and, despite their ethnic difference, were not denied access to the urban franchise in the later Middle Ages.⁶⁴ At Dublin and elsewhere, some persons with ethnically Irish names also gained the franchise, but they were relatively few in number.⁶⁵ Despite the existence of ethnically Irish neighbourhoods in or near many towns in Ireland (see, this volume, chapter 3), the native Irish seem only to have become a substantial part of the urban population towards the end of the Middle Ages.

Method.

The nine comparative case studies presented here have each been undertaken by a team of two – or three, in the case of chapter 3 – historians collaborating to apply a single research question to the towns of the regions they research. Two modes of comparative analysis have been used. The studies on the ethnic structure of towns (chapter 2), warfare and military affairs (chapter 8), quarters and quartermasters (chapter 9) and petitions to the crown (chapter

⁶⁰ Campbell, 'Benchmarking', 911.

⁶¹ Campbell, 'Benchmarking', 911.

⁶² Campbell, 'Benchmarking', 911.

⁶³ Campbell, 'Benchmarking', 911.

⁶⁴ E. Purcell, 'The city and the suburb: medieval Dublin and Oxmantown', in Sean Duffy (ed.) *Medieval Dublin VI* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2005), pp. 188–223; E. Purcell, 'The expulsion of the Ostmen: the documentary evidence, 1169–1171', *Peritia* 17–18 (2003–4), 273–94; Frame, *Colonial Ireland*, p. 89.

⁶⁵ Frame, *Colonial Ireland*, p. 89.

Pre-publication draft. Do not cite.

10) address aspects of urban life having a strong connection to the ethnic- and military-frontier character of the European periphery. The chapters on urban legislation (chapter 5), the participation of craftsmen in self-government (chapter 6), the shaping of public space (chapter 7) and women in the town economy (chapter 4) focus on more universal phenomena of medieval urban life as these were manifested on the European periphery. These modes of research have both contributed to the common goal of identifying periphery-specific and shared core-periphery features, as they existed in two (or three) regions at the edges of Europe. Moreover, they serve to test the hypothesis, set out above, that the reception and modification of core concepts regarding urban models and forms in the towns of Europe's peripheral regions reflects the active creation of unique societies there, not simply the passive, imperfect replication of core urban communities. We believe that the research presented here serves to point the way for future comparative study of urban life on the peripheries of medieval Europe.



Fig. 1. The urban network in Prussia in the 15th century.

Source: M. Biskup and R. Czaja (eds), *Państwo zakonu krzyżackiego w Prusach. Władza i społeczeństwo* (Warszawa, PWN, 2008), p. 187, drawn by Krystian Chyrkowski.



Fig. 2. The urban network in medieval Wales.

Source: based on M. F. Stevens, *The Economy of Medieval Wales, 1067–1536* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2019), p. 13, ‘Map 3. The towns of fourteenth-century Wales’.

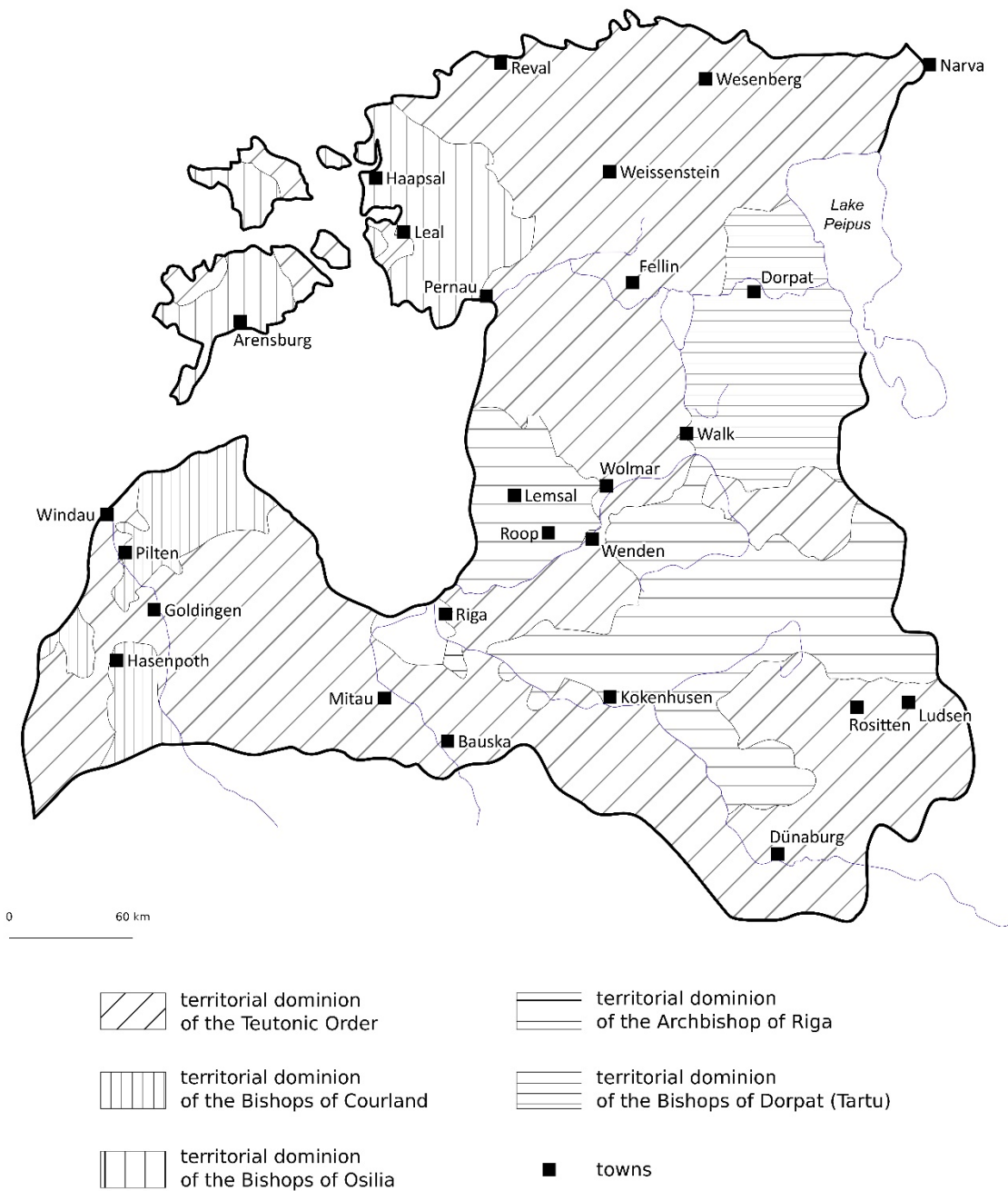


Fig. 4. The urban network in Livonia in the 16th century.

Source: based on R. Czaja and A. Radzimiński (eds), *The Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia: the Political and Ecclesiastical Structures, 13th–16th c.* (Toruń, TNT/, Böhlau Verlag, 2015), insert, ‘Map . Church divisions of Livonia in the 13th–16th c.’, drawn by Krystian Chyrkowski.