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Export of artworks from the territory
of the State of the Teutonic Order between
the mid-fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries.
Some aspects of the trade, art market, and
artistic contacts between Prussia and the North¹

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While the borders of the State of the Teutonic Order are clearly outlined, the artistic activity in this area is not that simple to define. The connections and trade routes among the many regions along the Baltic Sea coast during the Middle Ages are well known. The issue of the art market in Prussia under the rule of the Teutonic Knights leaves researchers with more questions than unequivocal answers because of the lack of written sources. Historical connections between Prussia and the North and similar stylistic features of artworks on that territories show that many artworks from the north Baltic Sea coast should be included in research on Prussian art. It is fully justified to expand the research borders to often overlooked exports from Prussia, which can be found in both Sweden and Finland.²

¹ This article is based on version of a paper which I presented during the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in 2017 (3–6 July). Part of this article is based on a research project that was possible thanks to financial support from the Herder Institute for Historical Research on East Central Europe – Institute of the Leibniz Association within the framework of a fellowship programme (June 2017).

² By Finland I refer to territories which are now a sovereign state, but which were under Swedish rule and were considered as an eastern Swedish province during the Middle Ages.

Although, this paper focuses primarily on altarpieces or preserved elements of them, there are many other examples of sculptures in Nordic countries in which Prussian features are recognized. Contacts between Prussia and the North and their historical background are outlined here, while other trade routes—mostly via Lübeck, which was the biggest trade centre of the Hanseatic League—are just mentioned and not described in detail.

Prussia and the North: The role of Visby and contacts with Sweden and its eastern province (Finland)

First, the role of Gotland as one of the most important trade centres around the Baltic should be highlighted. The trading significance of the island grew rapidly from the tenth century, even before its main town Visby was established. Visby flourished at the end of twelfth century, and by the beginning of the thirteenth century it was the largest town in the Baltic area and was inhabited mostly by German merchants. Visby harbour was a place where merchants' routes from all of Europe intersected. Although it was under Swedish rule at this time, it also served an important role of the capital of the Hanseatic League. During the fourteenth century, however, the high position of Gotland shifted completely³ with regard to both its trade and political context. The conquest of the island by Valdemar IV of Denmark in 1361 led to war between Denmark and the Hanseatic League. However, it was not the only conflict in which Visby was involved. At the end of the fourteenth century problems with the Victual Brothers, a guild of privateers headquartered in Visby, who became pirates and caused sailing the Baltic Sea to be very dangerous, forced the Hanseatic League to ask the Teutonic Order for help. In 1398 the Order conquered Gotland and exiled the Victual Brothers from a destroyed Visby. King Albert of Sweden conceded Gotland to the Teutonic Knights as a pledge. Although, in 1409 Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen sold the island to Queen Margaret of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. After many changes in fortune, Visby remained an important centre

³ L. Boje Mortensen, L. Bisgaard, 'Late Medieval Urban Civilization and its North European Variant,' in: *Guilds, Towns, and Cultural Transmission in the North, 1300–1500*, eds. L. Bisgaard, L. Boje Mortensen, T. Pettitt, Odense 2013, p. 9.

for Hanseatic trade on the Baltic Sea, but it never regained its significance or influence.⁴ While Visby was having problems, other towns on the Baltic coast, like Gdańsk, built strong positions.

Before the 1360s when Scania and Visby were conquered by Denmark, there were other trade centres in Sweden such as Birka, Sigtuna and Stockholm, but none was even close to the importance of the main harbour of Gotland. The conflict with Denmark led to internal conflicts among Swedes, but complicated internal policies did not interrupt the general development of Sweden as a country. The conquest of Finland also ended at this time.

The Baltic Sea was one of the most important areas for the Hanseatic League, but it was also of great importance for religious contacts. In this context, the Bridgettines, a monastic religious order founded in 1346 in Vadstena, should be mentioned here. The order spread widely throughout Scandinavia and had a great impact on the culture there and beyond.⁵

In 1374 in Gdańsk, or more precisely in the penitents' chapel located close to the place where the Church of St Bridget was consecrated in 1397,⁶ the relics of Birgitta Birgersdotter, the founder of the Bridgettines, were exhibited for two weeks during their transport from Rome to Vadstena.⁷ The Bridgettines came to Gdańsk from

⁴ For more see I. Andersson, *A History of Sweden*, London 1957; A. Palmer, *The Baltic. A new history of the region and its people*, New York–London 2006.

⁵ St Bridget was a popular saint and her visions were well known abroad. Evidence of this is the large number of artworks which depict her in their iconography. Her visions greatly influenced the scene of the Nativity of Jesus, which she described in detail and which was adopted by artists from different parts of Europe. The Visions of St Bridget also had a strong impact on Dorothea of Montau, who also had the opportunity to see the exhibition of the relics of St Bridget in Gdańsk. However, confirmation of the popularity of this saint cannot be based solely on the number of images of her as they were probably not that common in the State of the Teutonic Order or in Europe. At the least, not too many images of St Bridget are extant today. For more about Dorothea of Montau see S. Kościelak, 'Religion in Gdańsk in the Middle Ages and early modern times. From St Adalbert's mission to the Reformation victory,' in: *New Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Poland and Prussia. The Impact of Gdańsk*, ed. B. Możejko, London 2017, p. 92; M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Tu ergo flecte genua tua. Sztuka a praktyka religijna świeckich w diecezjach pruskich państwa zakonu krzyżackiego do połowy XV wieku*, Pelplin 2014; For more about images of St Bridget see eadem, *Plastyka średniowieczna od XII do XVI wieku. Katalog wystawy stałej*, Gdańsk 2007, p. 122.

⁶ Source: Encyklopedia Gdańska – Gedanopedia, *kościół św. Brygidy*, note: J. Szczepański, Source: https://www.gedanopedia.pl/?title=KO%5C%9ACI%3C%93%5C%81_%5C%9AW._BRYGIDY [accessed: 03.11.2017].

⁷ S. Kościelak, *Religion in Gdańsk...*, p. 92.

Sweden in 1392,⁸ and two years later they received permission from the pope to establish their third monastery in Europe (the second one was set up earlier in Florence).⁹ In 1396 the hospital, chapel and monastery, which was then under construction, of the above-mentioned penitents—a society of poor, ill, and fallen women some of whom later became Bridgettines—were given to the Bridgettines.¹⁰

The territory of Finland was part of Sweden, and these two regions were in constant contact before the thirteenth century. Swedish colonization was a long process, which probably took place mostly between the mid-twelfth to the mid-fourteenth centuries.¹¹ Swedes started to immigrate to Finland Proper during the Northern Crusades, which was a mission to Christianise pagan neighbours around the Baltic Sea. As far as economic and cultural issues were concerned, gradual colonization and the acceptance of the newcomers from Sweden by the native Finnish people from the thirteenth century was mostly peaceful, and both sides influenced the other. Initially, neither of the sides interfered economically with the other; Swedes were mostly farmers, while the Finns were engaged mainly in hunting and fishing (although, on the Åland Islands and in some parts of Finland farming was known even before Swedish migration).¹² ‘Finland’ as the name of the territory was not in use then and Swedes referred to the region as the ‘east country’ (*Österland*).¹³ The region was considered as separate territory which was also, but still a part of Sweden.

The Baltic Sea was one of the main trade areas of the Hanseatic League, but it was also important for trade on a smaller scale for towns or centres that were not directly related to Hansa. Under

⁸ M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Plastyka średniowieczna...*, p. 122.

⁹ Source: Encyklopedia Gdańska – Gedanopedia, *Brygidki*, note: S. Kościelak, Source: <https://www.gedanopedia.pl/gdansk/?title=BRYGIDKI> [accessed: 03.11.2017].

¹⁰ Although, both the Bridgettines and the Penitents were dissatisfied with this solution. The Bridgettines did not want women of low morals in their convent, and the Penitents were also unhappy to lose their properties, especially their monastery, to a different convent. This long-term disagreement, which was even discussed during the Council of Constance in 1415, ended in the second half of fifteenth century when the Penitents were granted some kind of distinctness. Source: Encyklopedia Gdańska – Gedanopedia, *Pokutnice*, note: S. Kościelak, Source: <https://www.gedanopedia.pl/gdansk/?title=POKUTNICE> [accessed: 03.11.2017].

¹¹ J.E. Olesen, ‘The Swedish Expeditions (“Crusades”) Toward Finland Reconsidered,’ in: *Church and Belief in the Middle Ages. Popes, Saints, and Crusaders*, eds. K. Salonen, S. Katajala-Peltomaa, Amsterdam 2016, p. 253.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

Swedish rule during the Middle Ages, Finland had only six established towns, including the oldest one of Åbo (Turku), and several merchant communities.¹⁴ All of the towns were situated on the Baltic Sea coast. The locations of the communities were also close to the coast. Some of these settlements, especially those on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, only existed for short periods of time and some were structured like towns, but they did not achieve town status and the character of their trade was also quite unofficial until the end of Middle Ages.¹⁵ Throughout the Middle Ages none of the Finnish towns was a part of Hansa, but trade with cities from the Hanseatic League existed. Western Finland and the Åland Islands had contact mostly with Stockholm, while the south-eastern part of this country was orientated mainly towards Tallinn. Contacts with Stralsund and Gdańsk were not that common, but they did occur.¹⁶ Direct trips between Prussia and Finland were not as popular as those which included a stop in Tallinn on the way.¹⁷

Art market between Prussia and the North: export of artworks from Prussia

The rank of Prussia under the rule of the Teutonic Order grew progressively strong from the beginning. Gdańsk, especially, should be mentioned here as one of the largest harbours on the Baltic Sea in the middle of the fifteenth century. Gdańsk had contacts with many Hanseatic harbour towns and played the role of transit point for trade between the northern, southern, eastern, and western parts of Europe.¹⁸

¹⁴ Established cities: Turku, Viipuri, Ulvila, Porvoo, Rauma, Naantali. For more information see T. Salminen, 'Finland, Tallinn and the Hanseatic League – Foreign Trade and the Orientation of Roads in Medieval Finland,' in: *Traffic, Needs, Roads. Perspectives on the Past, Present and Future of Roads in Finland and the Baltic Area*, ed. T. Mauranen, Helsinki 1999, p. 30.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 32.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 34.

¹⁷ I would like to thank Anu Mänd, who, after I delivered my paper on this topic at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in 2017, drew my attention to the fact that the archive in Tallinn should contain some written sources from that period which could be evidence of the trade of artworks from Prussia, especially Gdańsk, to Finland through Tallinn.

¹⁸ M. Bogucka, *Gdańsk jako ośrodek produkcyjny w XIV–XVII w.*, Warszawa 1962, p. 8.

The written sources do not contain much information about the art trade between the Nordic countries and Prussia, but there certainly were such contacts during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As one of the main harbours of the Hanseatic League on the Baltic Sea, Gdańsk played the role of an intermediate centre for the northern and eastern coasts of the Baltic Sea not only for trade in general, but also for the art market. Prussian harbours on the Baltic Sea played mainly a transit role, but this does not mean that Prussia did not also have its own production centres.

There are a few publications, including pre-war ones, where several altarpieces from Finland are mentioned as Prussian exports. What must be noted here is that there is no comprehensive publication about medieval altarpieces, either those created in local workshops or imported, in Finland. Two Finnish art historians must be mentioned here: Karl Konrad Meinander¹⁹ and Carl Axel Nordman,²⁰ both of whom have examined several altarpieces from Finland in the Prussian context. In his publication of 1939, Karl Heinz Clasen also mentions these artworks,²¹ as does Zofia Białłowicz-Krygierowa, who, in 1981, mentions them in her studies about the beginnings of the Silesian tradition of the winged altarpiece.²² Moreover, she considered them in the catalogue and wrote notes for three of them, but according to the vague character of those notes, it is quite obvious that she obtained all information about these altarpieces directly from the above-mentioned publication by Nordman from 1965.²³

Altarpieces, or their preserved element, which are now on the territory of Finland and were considered as Prussian imports are from Tyrvää, Mynämäki, Marttila and Rauma. Some of them are now in Finnish National Museum in Helsinki (Kansallismuseo), few could be found in situ. Also, on the territory of Åland Islands there is one altarpiece in Church in Sund.

Today only few reliefs exist from the altarpiece of Tyrvää (Swedish: Tyrvis) (Fig. 1), dated 1400–1420, now in the National Museum

¹⁹ K.K. Meinander, *Medeltida altarskåp och träsniderier i Finlands kyrkor*, Helsingfors 1908.

²⁰ C.A. Nordman, *Medeltida skulptur i Finland*, Helsingfors 1965.

²¹ K.H. Clasen, *Die Mittelalterliche Bildhauerkunst im Deutschordensland Preußen. Die Bildwerke bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1939, pp. 106, 354.

²² Z. Białłowicz-Krygierowa, *Studia nad snycerstwem XIV wieku w Polsce. Początki śląskiej tradycji ołtarza szafowego*, Warszawa–Poznań 1981.

²³ Compare ibidem, pp. 102–103, 112–115; C.A. Nordman, *Medeltida skulptur...*, pp. 390–423.



Fig. 1. Reliefs from the altarpiece, Tyrvää, ca. 1400–1420, now in Kansallismuseo in Helsinki; photo: Weronika Grochowska

of Finland in Helsinki. They are the groups of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, the *Nativity*, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Last Supper*, the *Entombment*, and the *Resurrection* and two slender pinnacles from the bench. Because of religious transformation, *Mary* from the Coronation group was separated from the other reliefs, which were mounted into a new corpus in the seventeenth century. At the same time, all the sculptures were repainted, but *Mary* gained different polychromy.

Based on general stylistic resemblances, this retablo was traditionally considered to be an import from Gdańsk or Malbork.²⁴ Indeed, the resemblances to works of art from workshops in Prussia are quite

²⁴ K.K. Meinander, *Medeltida altarskåp och träsniderier...*, p. 106; also in documentation from the National Museum of Finland, Helsinki. I would like to thank Sanna Teittinen, Heidi Rajala, and Jouni Kuurne from National Museum in Helsinki (Kansallismuseo) and Finnish Heritage Agency (Museovirasto) for all their help during my visit in 2016.

clear. The faces of the figures were created in the same characteristic way and details like double eyelids, characteristic chins, and naïve smiles are just some of the evidence to support this (Fig. 2). These details are also very characteristic of Prussian version of the style phenomenon of the Madonnas on Lions (Fig. 3). The *Adoration of the Magi* group from the Tyrvää altarpiece is a good example of the common motif of Jesus stretching his hands out to touch gifts from the Magis. Although another detail is particularly noteworthy—Jesus is completely naked. According to Monika Jakubek-Raczkowska, this is very rare iconographic detail from that time.²⁵ Exactly the same element was applied in another altarpieces from Prussia, for example, in reliefs preserved from the altarpiece in Grabowo which is now in the Museum of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn. The similarities amongst them and the scene from Tyrvää are not limited to this detail, but they also include the style, general composition, and proportions.

Another example is the altarpiece from Mynämäki (Swedish: Virmo) (Fig. 4), dated 1410–1420. Extant reliefs include the figure of *Christ* from the *Coronation of the Virgin* group; saints *Dorothea*, *Margarethe*, *Barbara* and *Catherine* (of which only half figure preserved); *Mary* and *John* from the *Crucifixion* group, of which only some parts are extant as well; and scenes of the *Annunciation*, the *Presentation of Jesus at the Temple*, the *Adoration of the Magi*, and the *Nativity*. This altarpiece was connected with the same workshop as that of the altarpiece from Tyrvää.²⁶ Among the many interesting details, one is worthy of attention; namely how the artist composed the lower parts of the sculptures, especially the lower part of the clothes and shoes. These elements bear clear resemblances not only to Prussian sculptures but also in a broader perspective to sculptures representing the style of Madonnas on Lion.

Extant sculptures from the altarpiece from the Church in Martila (Swedish: St Martens) also show many characteristic features of Prussian carvings. Although there is no information about the original structure of the retable, the sculptures give us some assistance in postulating a hypothetical reconstruction of at least the *corpus*, in which the *Coronation of the Virgin* group probably played the main role and probably was flanked by four *Virgines Capitaes*. Two of seven preserved figures, *St Dorothea* (Fig. 5) and *St Margarethe* (Fig. 6), are

²⁵ M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Tu ergo flecte genua tua...*, p. 525.

²⁶ K.H. Clasen, *Die Mittelalterliche Bildhauerkunst...*, p. 99; Z. Białłowicz-Krygierowa, *Studia nad snyderstwem...*, 1981, pp. 114–115.



Fig. 2. *Mary*, Tyrvää, ca. 1400–1420, now in Kansallismuseo in Helsinki; photo: Weronika Grochowska



Fig. 3. *Mary with the Child*, Jeziernik, ca. 1375, now in National Museum in Gdańsk; photo: National Museum in Gdańsk



Fig. 4. Reliefs from the altarpiece, Mynämäki, ca. 1410–1420, photo: Weronika Grochowska



Fig. 5. *St Margarethe*, Marttila, ca. 1420–1440, now in Kansallismuseo in Helsinki; source: www.finna.fi



Fig. 6. *St Dorothea*, Marttila, ca. 1420–1440, now in Kansallismuseo in Helsinki; source: www.finna.fi

now in the Finnish National Museum in Helsinki, while the other five sculptures are still in Marttila. Only two figures of male saints are extant—*St John the Evangelist* and *St Bishop*—which suggest that on the wings perhaps there were representations of the *Collegium Credo*, but this cursory assumption must be examined in more detail. With or without the *Collegium Credo*, this altarpiece could be a good example of Prussian production in its form and style.

Another detail could also be judged as characteristic of Prussia. The saints from the altarpieces from Tyrvää, Mynämäki, and Marttila sit on benches with cushions. This element is considered by researchers as a characteristic element of Prussian altarpieces. However, this detail is not a necessary element of every altarpiece from Prussia.

The altarpiece from the church in Rauma, dated c.1430–1450 (Fig. 7) has an iconographic programme that is similar to a few other Prussian altarpieces. The *Coronation of the Virgin* group, which is sometimes replaced with *Mary with the Child*, the *Virgines Capitales* in the *corpus*, and the *Collegium Credo* on the wings is quite a common scheme in this region. In this case, the *corpus* is enriched by the scene of the *Adoration of the Magi* in the lower part of the central

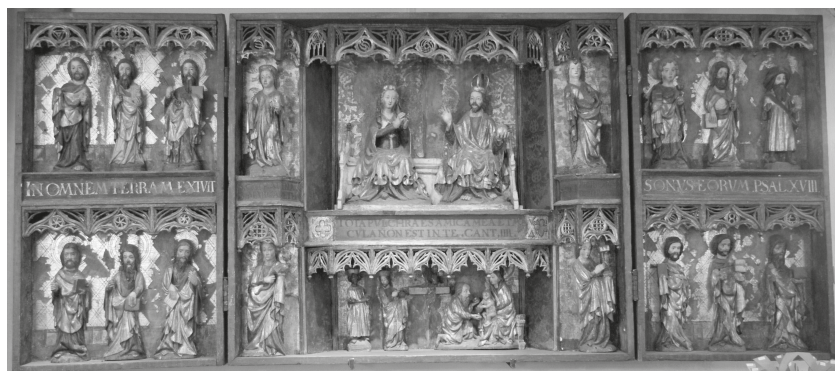


Fig. 7. Altarpiece, Rauma, ca. 1430–1450; photo: Weronika Grochowska

niche right below the *Coronation* group. Additional scenes in this part of the *corpus* also appeared in some Prussian altarpieces, but there are no sources that could support the assumption that this was common. The proportions of the Rauma altarpiece are also similar to Prussian examples. Many resemblances could be noticed with the altarpiece from Pörschken, now in the Castle Museum in Malbork, although, in this case, *Mary with the Child* occupies the central niche instead of the *Coronation* group, and there is no second scene below.

Another altarpiece (Fig. 8) which corresponds with those discussed above is in the church in Sund on the Åland Islands.²⁷ Since no significant carving workshop was located on the islands, the altarpiece from the church in Sund is believed to be an import from Prussia. While there is no information about its provenience, two scenarios are quite possible. The first, and easiest, explanation is that it was ordered specially from a Prussian workshop specifically for the church in Sund. The second possibility is that it came from the market in Åbo, which was one of the largest in the area. Another explanation places Prussia as a kind of centre for altarpiece mass production for export, although definitely on a smaller scale than that, for example, in Lübeck, and also one that catered to buyers from different regions. It is worth noting that there is evidence in written sources of a few individual orders

²⁷ During the Middle Ages, the Baltic Sea played important role for the Åland Islands. There was a lively trade among the islands and mostly Finland and Sweden. The main export products were fish, agricultural produce, and timber. Source: <http://www.alandmuseum.ax/en/historiens-aland/> [accessed: 30.09.2017].



Fig. 8. Altarpiece, Sund, ca. 1430–1440; photo: Weronika Grochowska

from abroad, for example from England so the first scenario could be possible.²⁸

As I have said, no written sources confirm the Prussian provenience of the altarpiece from Sund.²⁹ However, the proportions and general composition inside the *corpus* and wings recall those from Prussia, especially from the east — Warmia and Sambia. The faces of the female saints and their drapery also recall Prussian artworks. The altarpiece is attributed to Prussia not only by art historians because of many similar stylistic features but also by conservators and their research. According to Peter Tångeberg, the construction of the altarpiece is very different from that of those from Northern Germany and Holland, but close to those from Prussia.³⁰ He also mentions the imitation gold in the background of the altarpiece, in this case a thin layer of silver with a layer of yellow paint. According to Tångeberg, this kind of imitation gold is also typical of the eastern Baltic region. Both

²⁸ A. Woźniński, 'In the melting pot of different traditions, styles, and tastes. Gothic panel painting in Gdańsk,' in: *New Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Poland and Prussia. The Impact of Gdańsk*, ed. B. Możejko, London 2017, p. 145.

²⁹ I would like to thank Åsa Ringbom for help in obtaining literature about the Sund altarpiece.

³⁰ Å. Ringbom, Ch. Remmer, *Ålands Kyrkor. Volym III. Sund och Vårdö, Mariehamn* 2005, pp. 186–191.

Tångeberg and Hans Peter Hedlund, the conservator who restored the altarpiece in Sund in 1998, consider this arrangement to be original. This altarpiece remained *in situ* on the altar until 1880, when it was replaced by a new altar-painting. The old altarpiece was moved to the lowest part of the tower, where luckily it was saved from a large fire in 1921. After the restoration of the church in 1936–1937, it was returned to its original place. The present head of the *Madonna* is a copy in plaster of the original one since the head of the figure of *Mary* was destroyed during an act of vandalism in 1993.

Altarpieces from the territory of Sweden have been examined more comprehensively than those which are extant in Finland. According to Aron Andersson,³¹ many altarpieces in Sweden were connected mostly with Lübeck. Although Lübeck was the most important production centre, especially during the first half of the fifteenth century, many works of art were also exported to the North from the State of the Teutonic Order. Although, Tångeberg's further research shows that in Swedish territory there could be more than forty works of art of Prussian provenience, including fifteen altarpieces dated to the first half of the fifteenth century, that are in various states of preservation and completeness.³²

The Museum of Swedish History in Stockholm holds a small altarpiece from Väte (Gotland) with a figure of *St Anne* (with the *Virgin Mary* and originally with *Christ*) (Fig. 9), dated c.1425. Prior to Tångeberg's research, that altarpiece was considered to be a work produced in a local Gotland workshop,³³ but Tångeberg points out many aspects of it that resemble Prussian works, especially those from Gdańsk.³⁴ Indeed, the similarity of the faces of *St Anne* and *Mary* to that of, for example, *St Hedwig*, one of the figures from *Altarpiece of St Hedwig* from St Mary's Church in Gdańsk (Fig. 10), is quite obvious, even

³¹ A. Andersson, *Medieval Wooden Sculpture in Sweden. Volume III. Late Medieval Sculpture*, Uppsala 1980, p. 34–85.

³² P. Tångeberg, 'Ordensländischer Kunstexport nach Schweden um 1400–1430,' in: *Malerei und Skulptur des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit in Norddeutschland*, eds. H. Krohm, U. Albrecht, M. Weniger, Berlin 2004, p. 55.

³³ M. Rydbeck, *Medieval Wooden Sculpture in Sweden. Volume IV. The Museum Collection Catalogue*, Stockholm 1975, p. 285.

³⁴ P. Tångeberg, *Mittelalterliche Holzskulpturen und Altarschreine in Schweden: Studien zu Form, Material und Technik*, Stockholm 1986, p. 302; Moreover, this altarpiece is now on permanent exhibition in Statens Historiska Museet in Stockholm, and the work is attributed as being 'probably from Gdańsk.' The exhibition was curated in cooperation with Peter Tångeberg.



Fig. 9. Altarpiece with *St Anne*, Väte, ca. 1425, now in Historiska Museet in Stockholm; photo: Weronika Grochowska



Fig. 10. *St Hedwig* from *St Hedwig's Altarpiece*, Gdańsk, ca. 1430–1440; photo: Weronika Grochowska

if they originally came from different workshops. Based on formal features, Jakubek-Raczkowska mentioned the possibility of its provenience from the same workshop as a few other artworks from Gdańsk or from workshop from north-east Prussia, but originating in Gdańsk.³⁵ These include the figure of *St Barbara* from Stara Kościelnica, dated c.1420 (Fig. 11), the now lost figure of *St Nicolas* from the *Altarpiece of St Nicolas* from St Mary's Church in Gdańsk, dated c.1425, the relief with a scene of the *Dormition of the Virgin* also from St Mary's Church in Gdańsk, dated after 1400,³⁶ and a few other sculptures from different churches from the Warmia and Sambia regions.³⁷ In the Prussian context, not only are the stylistic and formal details of the sculpture of *St Anne* interesting; the altarpiece is also comparable to retables from Gdańsk in its overall form. Unfortunately, altarpiece that in construction is most like this from Väete is now lost, but is well known from a pre-war photograph.³⁸



Fig. 11. *St Barbara*, Stara Kościelnica, ca. 1420, now in National Museum in Gdańsk; photo: National Museum in Gdańsk

³⁵ M. Jakubek-Raczkowska, *Plastyka średniowieczna...*, p. 83.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 83.

³⁸ The altarpiece with the figure of St Barbara executed in amber; pre-war photo: W. Drost, *Die Marienkirche in Danzig und ihre Kunstschätze*, Stuttgart 1963, Fig. 87a.

Figures preserved in Church in Viby, Närke (province located in south central Sweden), are one of the most interesting examples of possible art transfer from the territory of the State of the Teutonic Order to the North. From original gothic altarpiece, dated ca. 1440, only sculptures of twelve apostles and the *Resurrected Christ* (Fig. 12) remain. All of them were initially in the same altarpiece, donated probably by Karl Knutsson Bonde, who had very active connections with Gdańsk even before his coronation as king of Sweden in 1448. Bonde was also one of the ladowners of the Viby parish.³⁹

There are no information about original construction of that altarpiece. Current one is from 1664. Figures of apostles from previous altarpiece were repainted and mounted into new artwork, created



Fig. 12. *Resurrected Christ*, Viby, ca. 1440; photo: Weronika Grochowska

³⁹ I would like to thank Benjamin Lundqvist and Anne-Marie Lenander for their hospitality during my visit in Viby in 2017. More about altarpiece from Viby: J. Alton, *Viby kyrkas restaurering 1990–1991*, Örebro 1991, p. 4.; A.M. Lenander Fällström, B. Lundqvist, S. Åkerlund, *Viby kyrka*, Vingåker 2010, p. 6–9; A. Andersson, *Medieval Wooden Sculpture...*, p. 58–59.

by local artist. The attributes of saints were replaced, mostly by spears, so in many cases identification is impossible. Figure of Christ is not a part of baroque altarpiece, but it is still at the same church. The most notable element of it is a sculpture of the *Resurrected Christ*, to which the Gdańsk *Christ* from the *Dispersion of the Apostles' Altarpiece* (Fig. 13) could have even been the model. Similar dimensions, stylistic solutions, and the general composition indicate that both figures were created in the same workshop or in workshops with the same artistic background.

There are many other artworks in Sweden and Finland that are considered by art historians as possible imports from the territory of the State of the Teutonic Order in Prussia. Sculptures from Viby are not the only examples of direct connections between Gdańsk artwork and that in Sweden. For example, another is a crucifix from Färentuna, which was linked with the *Crucifix* from St Catherine's Church in Gdańsk that is now held in the National Museum in Gdańsk. Worth to notice is that Karl Knutson Bonde could be also connected with this particular transfer – one of his daughters had wedding in Färentuna Church in 1440. Unfortunately, for other potential transfers there are no written sources which could outline the background of similar activity.



Fig. 13. The *Dispersion of the Apostles' Altarpiece*, Gdańsk, ca. 1440; photo: Weronika Grochowska

Conclusion

Prussia, and especially Gdańsk, should be taken into consideration in discussions of art productions centres in the Baltic Sea area. The need for new research on this topic was highlighted in the 1990s by Jan von Bonsdorff and in 2004 Adam S. Labuda.⁴⁰ More categorical steps in this direction have been taken by Tångeberg, who has attributed many more altarpieces to the territory of the State of the Teutonic Order than were previously connected with this area; his arguments are based mainly on construction and materials.⁴¹ Aside from researching artworks in Sweden and Finland that are already known as Prussian exports, many altarpieces which were traditionally considered as imports from Lübeck should also be analysed anew.

Generally, when considering the transfer of art three solutions are possible: the transfer of artworks, artists, or models (e.g. patterns, sketches).⁴² Although, because of the lack of written sources, it is impossible to determine unequivocally whether a particular altarpiece was, in fact, the product of a Prussian workshop or a local workshop in which artists from Prussia were working. Nevertheless, the resemblance of a large number of works from Sweden and Finland to Prussian art permits us to assume that within the territory of the State of the Teutonic Order there were workshops where works of art were produced not only for local needs, but also for export, mainly to the northern art market. Still, new extensive, comprehensive, interdisciplinary and international research about art transfer in the Baltic Sea region is needed.

⁴⁰ J. von Bonsdorff, 'Art Transfer in the Medieval Baltic Sea Area,' in: *Künstlerischer Austausch. Artistic Exchange*, ed. T.W. Gaetgend, Bd. 2, Berlin 1993, pp. 39–51; A. S. Labuda, *Die Retabelkunst im Deutschordensland 1350–1450* in: *Malerei und Skulptur des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit in Norddeutschland. Entstehung und Frühgeschichte des Flügelaltarschreins*, hrsg. H. Krohm, U. Albrecht, M. Weniger, Berlin 2004, pp. 37–54.

⁴¹ P. Tångeberg, *Mittelalterliche Holzskulpturen...*, p. 302.

⁴² J. von Bonsdorff, 'Art Transfer...', p. 43.