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«Aliens» in Religious Conflicts in Livonia at the Beginning of Confessionalisation

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Abstract

This article discusses the relationship between the religious - political events in Livonia and Prussia. Taking into account the existence of close links between this Baltic lands it seems quite natural question, whether there was any - any influence on the Duke of Prussia on processes within Livonia and how it happened? In the limelight is figure of Albrecht of Brandenburg – Ansbach, previously occupied Grand Master of the Teutonic Orde, and since 1525 became Duke of Prussia. If the 20-s years Prussia's influence was limited only by Riga, then starting with the 30-s traced the geographical expansion of the political influence of Albrecht of Prussia. It can be knit with two phases. The marker can be considered in 1529, after which the influence of the Duke of Prussia, i.e. the "alien" to Livonia political forces intensified, not only because of the burghers, but also the emergence of the possibility of support from the Archbishop and his coadjutor. E. There was a specific mechanism of action both through the city and through the church institutions through his brother Wilhelm.

Keywords: Livonia, Duke of Prussia, Albrecht von Brandenburg – Ansbach, feud of Ösel.

1. Introduction

The sixteenth century has brought significant adjustments not only into the political but also into the religious picture of Western Europe. These processes have affected the central, as well as the peripheral areas of previously unified Catholic world, including the lands owned by the Teutonic Order in Prussia and Livonia. However, after 1525 the balance was somewhat modified due to the secularization of the Order's possessions in Prussia and their transformation into a secular duchy, headed by Duke Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach, who had previously held the position of the Grand Master of the Catholic spiritual and knights corporation. Taking into account the existence of long-term close relations of these Baltic lands, as well as the interests of Albrecht himself, it seems quite natural to question – whether there was any impact of Duke on the internal Livonia processes? And if so, how did it occur?

It seems necessary to say a few words about the terminological construct of "aliens", which is regularly used in the context of study of a cultural space. In this case, it is possible to use it in a greater extent, as a political marker. This intent is related with the fact that it is quite difficult to

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claim how serious were the religious aspirations that drove the Protestant Duke in his relations with the Catholic Order, and whether he was moved by purely political interests. In this article, due to the limited volume, the exploration of this issue is not intended.

Also, a reservation shall be made with the respect to the reviewed time frame. The fact is that according to the most common chronology of confessionalisation proposed by H. Schilling, there are four major periods: 1) the end of the 40s. - 70s, XVI century. This is a relatively peaceful period inside the empire; 2) end of the 70s – beginning of the 80s, XVI century, the so-called "messenger of a religious conflict"; 3) 1580s-1620s, referred to as "the high point of confessionalisation"; 4) the end of the 40s, XVII. - XVIII centuries [1, 275].

At first glance, such a periodization is acceptable for the topic considered, as the situation in Livonia in the early 50s, XVI century, was exacerbated by the crisis in the Teutonic Order and the emergence of the pro-Prussian party among the brethren, on the one hand, and the foreign policy line carried out by the Polish crown and Albrecht of Prussia on the other hand. At the same time some clarification is also needed. However, the problem associated with the settlement of relations between the Protestants and Catholics arised back in Livonia in the mid 20 – s of XVI century. Landmaster Wolter von Plettenberg as the head of the Teutonic order in Livonia faced a choice, whether to secularize the possessions of the Order (like in Prussia), having the title of imperial prince starting with 1526, or to take the oath to the new Grand Master, Wolter von Kronberg and maintain the status quo. In this regard, we consider it possible, after H. Kluting, to slightly broaden the confessional era, taking 1525 as the reference point [2, 11-12]. Besides this, the last released four-volume, dedicated to the confessionalisation, expands these limits in the Livonian lands from 1500and allows to make the similar adjustments to the periodization of the initial phase of the confessionalisation [3].

Two main stages can be distinguished on the basis of the works of L. Arbuzov, if we are talking about the initial phase of the confessional processes: 1) the 20s, XVI century, when the main arenas, on which the confrontation between supporters of the Protestantism and the church institutions was unfolding, were, usually, the cities; 2) the end of the 20s - the first half of the 30s, XVI century - a period marked by aggravation of contradictions between the classes, in which the landmaster of the Teutonic Order in Livonia had to often act as an arbitrator. Certainly, the picture in different parts of this region did not look the same. At this time, the growth of supporters of the evangelical faith could also be traced among the knights. However, the picture was not the same everywhere. For example, the nobility of Harrien-Wierland compared with the same class in Ösel-Wiek took a more cautious stance in support of the protestants.

2. Materials and Methods

The article is based on analysis of materials of diets' resolutions in Livonia (Akten und Recesse der livländischen Ständentage) and others hanseatic cities (Hanserecesse). The methodological basis for the paper is the principle of scientific objectivity. In this study author used socio-critical, descriptive and historicall-typological approaches as well as qualitative methods of social studies. This theme is discussed in the context of confessionalization theory.

3. Discussion

In the 20s-30s, XVI the developed situation in this region was quite tense. One of the events of that time can be called the discord in Harrien –Wierland in 1525, during which the peasants rebelled against the knights and, among other things, demanded also the right to choose preachers on their own, as well as the opportunity to hold various church positions. Despite its brevity, this event has shown the connection of social and religious processes. It was just one of the bricks of the foundation of the political and religious tension in the 20s-30s, XVI century.

Against the background of spread of the evangelical doctrine, the Teutonic Order had to solve also the political problems closely related to the religious factor, which was typical in XVI century not only for Livonia, but also for the whole of the Holy Roman Empire. Internal political disturbances forcing the landmeister to react, were influenced, inter alia, by the foreign political events.

It was evident in 1525. On the one hand, on April 8th of that year, Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach confirmed the autonomy of the Livonian branch of the Order under the contract of 1513. At the same time, he added that the members of the spiritual and knights corporation can resign

from the Order. However, Wolter von Plettenberg, the landmeister, despite the desire to be a candidate as stated above, accepted Wolter von Kronberg, the German Master [4, 23], from 1527 Administrator of the Office of Grand Master and later Grand Master. By such an act, he reaffirmed his loyalty to the Order as a corporation. Prussia at that time went on its historical path. However, after taking the feudal oath to the Polish Crown in 1525, Albrecht of Prussia turned his attention to Livonia already in a slightly different way. The following year, he proposed to Sigismund I to conclude the contract with Muscovy, the main point of which would be the division of Livonia [5, Nr. 312].

The influence of Duke Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach can be observed soon after the formation of the Duchy. Already in 1526 the pro-Prussian party was formed in council of Riga. The most active representative of this party was Johann Lohmuller, the syndic of Riga, who maintained close contact with Albrecht von Brandenburg-Ansbach and his brother, Wilhelm von Brandenburg [6, 12]. Johann Lohmuller, the syndic of Riga and the author of the chronicles hoped to reach several goals through the establishment of the protestant duchy and the secularization of the Order in Livonia, or through the unification with Prussia: 1) unite with the economically strong region; 2) strengthen his own position in respect to the feudal cities; 3) protect the opposition-minded forces in the city by the powerful of landlord (Landesherr) [7, 259]. Perhaps due to this, the pro-Prussian party headed by Lohmuller in the Riga council sawa promising opportunity to implement foreign political plans in selection of Thomas Schoening, the new Archbishop of Riga, in 1528.

Thomas Schoening, the Archbishop of Riga, filed a complaint to the imperial court, concerning the significant decrease of the Archbishop's possessions with the advent of the Reformation to Riga. The complaint was approved by the Speyer Reichstag in 1529. Under this case, an imperial mandate for Livonia was issued back on September 11th, 1528. In this regard, the council sent Lohmuller to Lubeck in 1529. He held the negotiations with the authorized representatives of the Archbishop about the agreement, which resulted in the contract concluded on July 30th, 1530 for a period of 6 years. According to it, the Archbishop regained the authority over the city, but at the same time he had to guarantee the presence of three evangelical priests.

The contract was signed by Schoening, Lohmuller, the cathedral church and the council of Lubeck. On the way back to Riga, the syndic visited Luther in Wittenberg in order to hear his judgment and support for the contract. In a brief letter to the Riga Council, he interceded for the Wittenberg reformer, pointing to the potential benefits for the city in case of acceptance of Luther. He also took a stand on political issues of the livonian Reformation. However, Lohmuller did not know that the anti-prussian opposition perceived this contract as limiting its rights and declared Lohmuller traitor. Under their pressure, the Council had to reject this contract and to demand a public apology from Lohmuller. However, at the same time the pro-Prussian party won a certain victory.

Under its pressure, the Archbishop elected as his coadjutor the margrave Wilhelm von Brandenburg-Ansbach, the brother of Albrecht, the Duke of Prussia, who could help to launch the second mechanism of the influence on Duke Albrecht of Prussia - through the family ties. Thomas Schoening was fighting for the restoration of his Archbishop's rights, hoping for Albrecht's support. This resulted in appointing Wilhelm as the Archbishop's coadjutor on September 15th, 1529 in Königsberg [8, 117]. This way, the Archbishop concluded a defensive alliance with Albrecht, actually directed against the Order. At the same time, the suzerain of Albrecht, Sigismund I, the Polish King, was asked to support the coadjutor and the Archbishop of Riga. Margrave himself was secretly informed about this by his chamberlain, Meinecke von Schierstedt. However, Schoening most likely did notknow about the Wilhelm's plans to transform Livonia into a secular principality. In particular, the words of Wolfgang Loss, who was an advisor to the Duke, supported such intentions in 1529: «...undt ist der konig in Livlandt bereits gefundten...» [9, 121]. The next step was in July of 1530: at the Diet in Wolmar Schoening cancelled the so-called act of humility, signed by the Bishop of Dorpat, Johann von Blankenfelde, in 1526, according to which the archbishopric remained under the authority of the Order. The tone of this agreement was such that the Archbishop was endowed with his rights only with the consent of the Order. Wolter von Plettenbergbacked off in this situation, probably not only with the purpose to keep the peace, but also with the hope to terminate the alliance between Schoening and Albrecht.

Another conflict, which was significantly influenced by the Duke of Prussia, was another part of the territory of the Livonian Confederation – Ösel – Wiek, the active phase of which started in

1529. That year, Wilhelm von Brandenburg took a position of a coadjutor of the Archbishop of Riga, which was a certain springboard for obtaining a position of the head of the local diocese [10, 347]. Moreover, that was the year of active operating of the family ties mechanism. The apogee of this will be the so-called Feud of Ösel at the turn of 20s-30s, XVI century.

The background was formed by the events 1527, when the deceased Bishop of Ösel, Johannes Kivel IV (1515-1527) was succeeded by Georg von Tiesenhausen, and since he was not disposed to the evangelical faith, he confirmed the privilege of gift granted by his predecessor to the vassals of Ösel–Wiek [11, 198]. However, when on October 18th, 1530 the main capitul of Hapsal (presently, Haapsalu) elected Buxhövden as the Bishop, the latter decided to start a fight with the knighthood of Wiek [12, 13]. Being a devout Catholic, he refused to confirm Kivel's privilege [13, 336], which said about the participation of the vassals in the election of a Bishop. Perhaps this position was associated with a growing interest of the class to Lutheranism.

In a written explanation addressed to the diet, Wilhelm von Brandenburg claimed that he represented the interests of the papacy and the emperor, and that he was invited by the classes, trying to show the legitimacy of his election [14, 147]. He received support from the Polish king, as he was the nephew of the latter. Sigismund I sent to the Landtag his envoys who had to accurately clarify the situation. In case of recovery of claims by Wilhelm von Brandenburg to the bishopric of Ösel–Wiek, the king could help his relation [15, 279], which was a direct threat of interference into the internal affairs of Livonia.

Concerned with these events, Wolter von Plettenberg, the Landmeister of the Teutonic Order, began to conduct the secret negotiations with Jürgen von Ungern, the leader of the Ösel knights. First of all, the issue was discussed on how to confront the threat of war. The head of the spiritual and knights corporation in Livonia hoped for the possibility of resolving the issue of Ösel «uf dem rechtweg» [16, 339], but the diet's position was aimed to preserving the status quo [17, §58—70].

Pressured by the knights of Wiek, disgruntled by the new Bishop, in November 1532, the main capitul elected Wilhelm von Brandenburg as a Bishop. He accepted the oath in Hapsal but the Ösel's vassals supported to Buxhövden. In relation to this, the military preparations began in winter for the event, which will later be called «the rebellion in Wiek» or «the Feud of Ösel». Wilhelm subdued a significant part of Wiek, by occupying the Bishop's residence in Hapsal and the castles in Leal and Lode, and Buxhövden reterated to Ösel, Ahrensburg, hoping for the support of his loyal knights.

The coadjutor found a supporter in the person of Jürgen von Ungern, the above-mentioned head of the knights (the position of Ritterschaftshauptmann in Ösel bishopric appeared in 1527) [18, Nº 167]. Their acquaintance took place back in 1525, at diet in Wolmar, in which Wilhelm participated as an envoy of Albrecht of Prussia.

Quite a difficult situation emerged for the Order in general and for Wolter von Plettenberg in particular. The landmaster criticized Albrecht's and Wilhelm's attempts to create in Livonia the Duchy of Brandenburg, which could be learned from the testimony of Jürgen Wullenweber, the burgomaster of Lubeck [19, Nº 344]. As an opponent of the margrave, the landmaster refused to form an alliance with the forces outside of Livonia [20, 789]. Council of Lubeck, on the other hand, warned him against the secularization of the Order, but it is doubtful that Wolter von Plettenberg had such intentions.

On April 1st 1533, he and his coadjutor Hermann Brugennei, who was also a landmarshal, concluded the union with the vassals of Ösel and the city of Riga, which guaranteed to the contracting parties an unrestricted performance of religious rites [21, 18]. It was very important for Wolter von Plettenberg himself because, according to the agreement, the opposing parties had to renounce the use of force, including the resorting to the help of allies outside of Livonia. It was forbidden to start a new war, but the conflict already unfolded in Ösel–Wiek had to be settled, and Wilhelm had to prove it [22, 271].

At the same time Johann Lohmuller, the syndic of Riga, while in Wenden (where he met Lorenz von Ochtern, the Chancellor of the Teutonic Order in Livonia), called Albrecht of Prussia to join an alliance with Riga [23, Nº 376]. Supporters of the pro-Prussian party in the Riga Council, who wanted to make an impact, sent their envoys to Wenden with the task of negotiating with Albrecht. Apparently, the mentioned persons pursued two main objectives. On the one hand, with the support of both representatives of the Brandenburg family, they hoped to strengthen their positions in the city council, and on the other hand—they were eager to significantly diminish—if

not particularly to deprive the influence of the Order on the local government. Such policy served as a certain catalyst of a confrontation inside the Riga Council [24, 15].

In many ways, Plettenberg put himself in line of fire of the opposition, which considered the occurrence of the alliance as the abandonment of the Diet's resolutions adopted in 1532. One of its members was the Bishop of Dorpat, Johann Bei (1528-1543) - a supporter of a tough "Catholic" line against Wilhelm. There was another person who opposed the alliance - Hermann von Ronnenberg, the Bishop of Courland: he was beware of an evangelical state coup from Wolter von Plettenberg's side and therefore he tried to prevent an alliance with Wilhelm. Noteworthy is the position of Dorpat and Revel, which adhered to «hilten sich abseits» [25, N^0 376] tactics, in spite of the commitment to the evangelical faith. The nobility of Harrien and the Dorpat bishopric did not join the alliance.

In the Order itself the criticism could be also heard. Commander of Fellin Rupert de Grave was an uncompromising opponent of Prussia. His dissatisfaction was haredprimarily bytheyoung members of the Order, who even threatened to suspend the landmaster, since they opposed the search for a compromise with the coadjutor. This follows from another letter of Lohmuller to Albrecht from June 15th, 1533, where he pointed out that the Wenden alliance «nicht tiff im herczen stecket» [26, 409].

At the diet in Fellin in 1534 the classes rebuked the Archbishop of Riga for the activities of his coadjutor. The Archbishop assured that it would only be for the benefit of the Livonian lands and would not damage neither the Order, nor the classes. Wilhelm, as he said, upon his arrival to Livonia, could take an oath, respect all the privileges and freedoms, as well as submit to the Roman Church, however he did not follow this path [27, Nº 584]. The decision of this diet was apparently aimed against the Wenden alliance, by basically nullifying it. The participants, including Schoening and Bruggeney, decided to announce Buxhövden as the legally recognized Bishop of Ösel –Wiek. As a result, Wilhelm had to give up his claims to these territories and to return them all areas occupied by him. Diet's resolutions were adopted to protect the lands against unrests and internal armed conflicts, as well as against any external interference, particularly on the part of Wilhelm and Albrecht (it is very symptomatic that in the first half of XVI century, they were perceived as one agent in diplomatic games). Wilhelm was called to settle the conflict with Buxhövden, and to accept the results of Fellin agreements [28, Nº 588].

Activities of the protestant preachers were not clearly stipulated in this recession (the resolution of the diet, which caused the discontent of the cities [29, 273]. This proved to be an important point, since the Prussian party hoped that after the adoption of Evangelism by Wilhelm, Livonia will be secularized in accordance with the Prussian model.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, we want to say, that The Feud of Ösel showed the complexity of the processes, which were taking place in Livonia at the dawn of the confessionalism era. Two opposing camps emerged clearly in this conflict - the Order and its supporters represented by the Bishop of Öseland his vassals, on the one hand, and the supporters of the pro-Prussian party represented by the margrave Wilhelm von Brandenburg, the coadjutor of the Archbishop of Riga and his followers – on the other hand. The Feud of Ösel was the result of the accumulated political and confessional contradictions. Since the influence of the Catholic Archbishop could be an obstacle for the secularization of Livonia, the goal of Wilhelm von Brandenburg acting on the side of the protestant Albrecht of Prussia was the occupation of church positions.

In the twenties Prussia's intervention was limited only to Riga, but starting with the thirties, the geographical expansion of the political influence of Albrecht of Prussia can be traced. It could be related with two phases of the influence of the Duke of Prussia on the processes taking place in Livonia in the 20-30s. The year 1529 can be considered as a certain marker, after which the influence of the Duke of Prussia, i.e. of political forces "alien" for Livonia intensified, not only due to the part of the burghers, but also due to the emergence of the possibility of support from the Archbishop and his coadjutor. This way a specific mechanism of impact both through cities and through church institutions appeared.

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«Чужие» в религиозных конфликтах в Ливонии на начальном этапе конфессионализации

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается взаимосвязь между религиозно – политическими событиями в Ливонии и Пруссии. Принимая во внимание существование тесных контактов между этими прибалтийскими землями, , кажется вполне закономерным вопрос, наблюдалось ли какое — либо влияние герцога Прусского на внутриливонские процессы? И если да, то каким образом оно происходило? В центре внимания фигура Альбрехта Бранденбург — Ансбахского, занимавшего ранее должность верховного магистра Тевтонского ордена, а с 1525 г. ставшего герцогом Прусским.

Если в 1520-е гг. вмешательство Пруссии ограничивалось только Ригой, то начиная с 1530-х гг. прослеживается географическое расширение политического влияния Альбрехта Прусского. Это может быть с вязано двумя этапами влияния герцога Прусского на процессы происходящие в Ливонии в 1520-1530 гг. Определенным маркером можно считать 1529 г., после которого влияние герцога Прусского, т. е. «чужих» для Ливонии политических сил усилилось не только благодаря части бюргерства, но и появлению возможности поддержки со стороны архиепископа и его коадъютора. Т.е. появился определенный механизм воздействия как через города, так и через церковные институты.

Ключевые слова: Ливония, герцог Прусский, Альбрехт Бранденбург – Ансбахский, Эзельская распря.

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