

lich entfachte Konflikt zwischen dem Bischof und seinen Adligen kam für Wilhelm allerdings zu spät.

Als Ursachen der Fehde sind die wirtschaftliche Lage des Bistums und vor allem der Streit des Bischofs mit seinen Vasallen um die Privilegien anzusehen. Beide Probleme hatte Reinhold von Buxhoeveden von seinem Vorgänger Georg von Tiesenhausen geerbt, der die Löhne der Amtsträger in verantwortungsloser Weise erhöht und die Freiheiten der Adligen erweitert hatte. Buxhoeveden aber war nicht bereit, den Kurs seines Vorgängers fortzusetzen, weshalb es zum Konflikt mit den Vasallen kam. Diese Widersprüche boten gute Voraussetzungen für die politischen Ambitionen Markgraf Wilhelms, der eng mit Georg von Ungern verbunden war, welcher die unzufriedenen Adligen im Stift Ösel anführte. Der Religionskonflikt blieb, auch wenn die Sympathien des wickschen Adels für den protestantisch gesinnten Wilhelm eine gewisse Rolle spielten, im Hintergrund. Auch Wilhelm verzichtete nicht auf die Maskerade, sich beim Papst als guten Katholiken und den Bischof Reinhold als abtrünnigen Häretiker darzustellen.

SUMMARY

The Civil War in Läänemaa and Margrave Wilhelm von Brandenburg

The 1532–1536 civil war in the Saaremaa bishopric, known traditionally as *Wicksche Fehde*, took place between the local bishop Reinhold von Buxhoeveden and Margrave Wilhelm, the coadjutor of the Archbishop of Riga. Interpersonal relations, Reinhold's financial troubles with remunerating his bishopric's officials, and conflicts between the supporters and opponents of the Reformation became intertwined as the events unfolded. Above all, it was an attempt by Margrave Wilhelm, brother of Duke Albert of Prussia, to achieve the status of territorial lord and prince of the Empire. The main source of the paper is Wilhelm's correspondence with his brother.

Immediately after Reinhold was elected bishop in 1530, he provoked a conflict with the vassals and canons of Saaremaa, as he refused to accept their extensive privileges at the time when the bishopric was in a dire financial situation. In 1532, the bishop's opponents, led by vassal Georg von Ungern, elected Lutheran Margrave Wilhelm as an anti-bishop. The margrave eventually had hoped to secularize the bishopric and create a new dynasty, but in reality the Saaremaa bishopric was split: mainland Läänemaa remained under Wilhelm's control while Reinhold retained

the islands. Wilhelm's grab for power was probably not coordinated with his brother Albert, yet he could still hope for foreign help from Prussia, Poland, Denmark, and Brandenburg. The lords of Livonia, however, distanced themselves from Wilhelm, whereas Wolter von Plettenberg, the Livonian Master of the Teutonic Order, remained undecided despite his interests in maintaining a balance in the region. Both bishops accused each other in using violence, while the Livonian diet repeatedly insisted on finding a non-violent solution to the conflict.

During the hostilities, various areas of the bishopric were ravaged. In one case in 1533, the episcopal town of Vana-Pärnu was burned to the ground. For Wilhelm, the situation turned for the worse, as he was unable to either organize active foreign support or marshal military forces. Essentially, he lacked the financial resources necessary for success. The Pope, to whom Wilhelm presented himself as a devout Catholic, refused to acknowledge him during Reinhold's lifetime. Wilhelm's proceeding in Imperial Chamber Court was equally unsuccessful, and the Livonian Order, afraid of foreign intrusion – especially from Albert of Prussia – aligned itself increasingly with Wilhelm's opponents.

In September 1534, Wilhelm fled Läänemaa. In 1535, he requested no more than the position of coadjutor bishop of Saaremaa, but Reinhold was unwilling to compromise. Even Duke Albert withdrew his support from his brother, deeming it to be too costly and ineffective. Wilhelm, tired of the prolonged conflict and burdened with substantial debts, surrendered in July 1536. The Livonian arbitration decided that Wilhelm's losses must be compensated by those noblemen of Läänemaa who had supported him; however, they were incapable of doing so. It was not until 1539 when Wilhelm, the Archbishop of Riga now, could again actively participate in Livonian politics.

Wilhelm's endeavours between 1532 and 1533 could not be regarded as completely hopeless. While Reinhold had poor relations with his vassals and canons, some Livonian lords were willing to reconcile with. However, Reinhold's military dominance and successful forays secured him a power base in Saaremaa, not to mention the support from several important officials of the Order. Apparently, it was due to lack of resources that Wilhelm's diplomacy at Papal Curia and Imperial Chamber Court failed. Between 1534 and 1536, the only thing Wilhelm could hope for was a change in the international situation, which did not occur.