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## King Wenceslas' relations with the Teutonic Order in light of the dispute over the Archbishopric of Riga (1392–1397)

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### ABSTRACT

King Wenceslas of the Romans (1378–1400) and of Bohemia (1378–1419) supported the Teutonic Knights, but his involvement in the Eastern Baltic region during the 1390s turned him into an enemy of the Knights. This paper argues that the change in Wenceslas' policy was solely in the interests of his courtier Duke Swantibor of Pomerania-Stettin, who sought to establish his son as Archbishop of Riga. Wenceslas' support for Swantibor owed to the traditions of courtly favor and instability in Bohemia, not out of any personal grudge against the Knights, as was claimed in earlier historiography.

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### Introduction

During the first 15 years of his reign as King of the Romans (1378–1400) and King of Bohemia (1378–1419), Wenceslas supported the Knights of the Teutonic Order in their conflicts with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland. However, his positive attitude toward the Order changed in the 1390s and Wenceslas made an alliance with the King of Poland in 1395. According to Libor Jan, 'It seems clear that the dispute over the archdiocese of Riga led to a considerable deterioration in King Wenceslas's relations with the Teutonic Order' (Jan 1999, 234–35). In 1392, Wenceslas intervened in the conflict between the current Archbishop of Riga and the Teutonic Knights in hopes of securing the son of Duke Swantibor I of Pomerania-Stettin (ca. 1351–1413) with the position of Archbishop of Riga. Past historians interpreted this intervention as a deliberate move against the Teutonic Order. In their view, the sudden change in Wenceslas attitude toward the knights was caused by a personal grudge. This grudge was said to have resulted from the fact that the Teutonic Knights had repeatedly declined an offer made by the king's younger brother duke John of Görlitz, who sought to pawn the New March of Brandenburg to the knights (Lindner 1880, 148–66, 214–15, 274–77; Girgensohn 1910, 29–30, 43–59; Vetter 1912, 14–48). Although the claim that the king's intervention in the Archbishopric of Riga was caused by his personal resentment of the Knights is purely speculative, it has

nevertheless not been disputed in later treatments of the subject (Jähnig 1970, 11; Rautenberg 1973, 639; Boockmann 1975, 65).<sup>1</sup>

I claim that the change in Wenceslas' politics regarding the Teutonic Order was not caused by his personal resentment of the Knights, but resulted instead from the influence of one of his courtiers: Duke Swantibor I of Pomerania-Stettin. Client-patron relationships in medieval courts were based on the reciprocity of services rendered and favor received. In other words, the patron needed to show favor to his client in order to ensure his continued service (Rabeler 2004, 45–46 and 60–61). One can assume that royal favor in Swantibor's case took the form of Wenceslas' support for his endeavor to appoint his son Archbishop of Riga. When the duke's efforts clashed with the interests of the Teutonic Order, Wenceslas decided to back his courtier. Furthermore, the Knights themselves did not think of the king as their enemy, but instead attempted to influence him to relinquish his support of Duke Swantibor and his son Otto (ca. 1380 – 1428).

Discussion of the influence of particular courtiers on royal decisions is strangely lacking in recent studies of King Wenceslas. Earlier scholars, Lindner for example, considered Wenceslas an incompetent ruler, who stood under the influence of favorites (1880, 171–76).

František Graus (1987) and Wilhelm Hanisch (1978) revise the harsh critique of Wenceslas by earlier scholars, who accused him of utter incompetence. Peter Moraw (2004) argues against the widespread belief that Wenceslas' court was run by favorites. A favorite in Moraw's definition was a person of lower status, who achieved a position higher than fitting to his social background. In his view every courtier enjoyed the king's favor, but their position in the court and closeness to the king was determined by their social status. Therefore, Moraw suggests to use the term courtier to denote powerful courtiers and reserve the term favorite for those persons who enjoyed a position higher than fitting to their social status. Ivan Hlaváček, the most prolific scholar on Wenceslas' court, stresses the fact that the king often showed a lack of personal interest toward politics, which meant that his councilors and courtiers had a strong influence over royal decisions, but Hlaváček does not elaborate this point any further (1987, 217–18, 2002, 124–26). However, Hlaváček does point to the heterogeneous composition of Wenceslas' court, where powerful courtiers headed groups of personal clientele (Hlaváček 1996, 103–105).

Favor becomes apparent in historical sources through the acts of the patron, such as grants of fiefs, privileges, or political support (Hirschbiegel 2004, 36–37). The primary sources used in this article are privileges and mandates issued by Wenceslas, diplomatic correspondence, and instructions for the envoys the Teutonic Order sent to negotiate with the king. My interpretation of royal privileges and mandates is based on the methodology of 'responsive lordship,' which stipulates that the majority of documents issued by medieval popes and emperors were in response to pleas and requests, and cannot therefore be interpreted as displaying only the intentions of the ruler (Pitz 1971; Heinig 1998). The potentates of the Holy Roman Empire regarded the emperor foremost as the source for legitimacy to their status, privileges, and lordship (Wefers 2013, 214). Therefore, the majority of documents issued by Holy Roman Emperors and Kings of the Romans were in fact meant to fulfill the political aims of a regional potentate and not of the ruler himself. Admission, rejection, and sometimes modification of the document requested, was of course left to the emperor's discretion, but documents issued on the basis of a request usually

reflected the emperor's will solely in that respect (Heinig 1998, 39–40). Between 1394 and 1396, Wenceslas issued documents, which legitimated Otto's claims to the Archbishopric of Riga (von Bunge 1859, no. 1366, 1368 and 1417). It is inherent to these documents that they were issued upon the request of Otto's father Duke Swantibor and therefore reflect the aims of the Duke.

It is important to note that there were no fixed regulations on how to respond to requests for royal documents during Wenceslas' reign. The king's reaction was largely based on consultations with the best-informed members of his council and court regarding the matter at hand (Hlaváček 1998, 23). This practice gave courtiers ample means of influencing royal decisions to the advancement of their own personal goals or, in other words, to receive royal favor. Taking this influence of the courtiers on royal decisions as the basis for interpreting the correspondence between King Wenceslas and the Teutonic Order (von Bunge 1857, no. 1327–28) and their negotiations (von Bunge 1859, no. 1369, 1404, 1421 and 1424–25, 1873, no. 2930; Voigt 1857, no. 87; Fortstreuter 1961, 355–61) enables the delineation of Swantibor's influence on royal policy regarding the Archbishopric of Riga. Furthermore, unsuccessful attempts by the envoys of the Teutonic Knights to influence the king detail the rivalry for the king's ear between the duke and the Knights.

The following sections of the article are titled according to the roles Wenceslas played during the course of the events surrounding the Teutonic Order and Duke Swantibor: judge, liege, and arbitrator. In this article, 'judge' refers to the king holding formal legal authority to solve disputes between imperial princes (Wefers 1989, 225–27; Weiler 2009, 123–29). The term 'liege' is employed to denote the king providing his vassal with the legitimacy to hold a certain fief and ensuring his rights to that fief against pretenders (Krieger 1979, 470–76). Finally, the term 'arbiter' is used in the sense of a peacemaker elected by the disputing parties (Geary 1994, 149–157; Kuehn 2009, 337), who in Late Medieval Germany sometimes bestowed this honor upon their monarch (Wefers 1989, 225, 2013, 214).

### **Wenceslas as judge: the first attempt to establish Otto in Riga**

The church province of Riga covered most of Livonia and Prussia while the diocese of Riga itself lay in Livonia, a region on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. Livonia formed in the thirteenth century as a result of crusading and missionary activities of north and northwest German lower nobility. The region of Livonia was a somewhat exceptional area in medieval Europe because it lacked secular princes. The land was divided between four prince-bishoprics (the archbishopric of Riga and the bishoprics of Curonia, Osilia and Tartu) and the territory under the rule of the Livonian Branch of the Teutonic Order (Urban 2004). The Livonian region lay outside the sphere of interest of both the Holy Roman Emperors and Bohemian Kings. In the 1220s, Bishops Albert of Riga, Herman of Tartu, and Christian of Osilia became vassals of King Henry (VII), son and co-ruler of Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II from 1220 to 1234. Later bishops did not renew these initial ties of vassalage. Fromhold von Viffhusen, Archbishop of Riga from 1348 to 1369, was the sole exception; he renewed his ties of fealty with Emperor Charles IV in 1356 (Willoweit 2006; Mäesalu 2013; Hellmann 1989). During the reigns of King John I of Bohemia and his son and successor, Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, a few royal officials with clerical background had some benefices in Livonian bishoprics, but

these contacts were lost during the reign of Wenceslas (Selart 2013). In the beginning of the 1390s, Livonia was definitely 'out of the picture' for the royal court in Prague. Wenceslas' interest toward Livonia must have been created by outside influence and promising opportunity.

A promising opportunity arose in the summer of 1392, when John of Sinten († 1397), Archbishop of Riga from 1373 to 1393, wrote a letter to Wenceslas and asked for his support against the Livonian Branch of the Teutonic Knights (von Bunge 1857, no.1327; Koppen [1889] 1967, 51–52). The church of Riga was under constant pressure from the Teutonic Order, who sought to dominate Livonia (Jähnig 1998, 2002). In 1388, a vassal of the archbishop pawned his fief to the Teutonic Knights against the ruling of Archbishop John of Sinten. As the dispute grew, the archbishop fled to the imperial town of Lubeck with a few canons of the cathedral-chapter. In 1391, the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order occupied the territory of the archbishopric and imprisoned those canons who remained in Livonia (Girgensohn 1910, 22–28).

The complaints of the archbishop of Riga were well received in Prague. During the following year, Wenceslas wrote to Pope Boniface IX (1389–1404) denouncing the actions of the Teutonic Order and demanding that, if the chair of Riga becomes vacant, the pope should postpone the appointment of a new archbishop until the king had presented him with a suitable candidate (Lindner (1880, 169).<sup>2</sup> It seems that Archbishop John's plea for help had given Wenceslas an opportunity to advance Otto, the son of Duke Swantibor of Pomerania-Stettin, as John's successor to the archiepiscopal chair of Riga.

Swantibor's influence in Wenceslas' court was based on the close ties between the ducal house of Pomerania-Stettin and the Luxembourg dynasty. Swantibor's father Barnim III (ca. 1300–1368) had entered the service of Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV (1346–1378) and given his elder son Casimir III (ca. 1348–1372) to be raised at the imperial court in Prague (Auge 2009, 272–74, 2011, 17–24; Schmidt 1978; Schlinker 1999, 199–202; Conrad 2002, 160–62). Swantibor himself was most active at the court of Wenceslas during the years 1391–1400, when he served as one of the king's councilors and performed the duties of his judge-delegate and envoy (Zdrenka 1995, 167–68, 178–85).

Swantibor's service as judge-delegate of King Wenceslas (Diestelkamp 2008, no. 307–15, 2001, no.150–51 and 194–96, 2004, no.322 and 394) was of particular importance for receiving royal favor. The imperial court of law had, by Wenceslas' time, embraced the idea that a jury should only be comprised of men equal to the status of the defendant and the accused (Krieger 1979, 518–22). Since Wenceslas had difficulties attracting German nobles to his court (Moraw 1987, 198; Hlaváček 1987, 230–31), the custom that other princes may only judge a prince entailed a risk of seriously hampering the king's capabilities of performing his judicial duties over German princes. He needed to have trustworthy princes available to function as his judge-delegates and jurymen. Swantibor was one of the few imperial princes offering these kinds of services to Wenceslas. Hence, Swantibor was held in high regard by the king.

Family connections may also have played a part in the king's favorable stance toward Swantibor. Elisabeth of Pomerania-Wolgast (†1393), the fourth wife of Charles IV and Wenceslas' stepmother, was a distant relative of Swantibor. Both belonged to the Pomeranian ducal family of the Greifs. Their relation was apparently close enough

for Wenceslas to regard Swantibor as belonging to his kin (von Bunge 1859, no. 1366 and 1417–18).

To fulfill his plan, Wenceslas needed to put pressure on both Archbishop John and the Teutonic Order. To do so, he decided to take their dispute under his judicial authority. In the summer of 1392, Wenceslas wrote to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Conrad of Wallenrode (in office 1391–1393), and ordered him to release the canons of Riga from captivity and lift the occupation of the archdiocese. The Grand Master did not reply; so the king sent his envoy to Prussia in September 1392. The king instructed the envoy to take control of the territory of the Archbishopric of Riga. Conrad of Wallenrode replied that he was not sufficiently informed in order to accept or reject the king's demands, as disputes between the Archbishopric of Riga and the Livonian Branch of the Teutonic Order had always been resolved by the papal curia. Conrad promised to give an answer to the king as soon as the Livonian Master had provided him with sufficient information (von Bunge 1857, no. 1327–28). The Grand Master was actually very well informed about the dispute with Riga. His feigned ignorance was merely a means of delay. Wenceslas, on the other hand, had probably not expected Conrad to actually follow his demands. The aim of Wenceslas was to push the Teutonic Order into further negotiations.

Archbishop John arrived at the royal court in Prague in early 1393. On January 30, Wenceslas confirmed the imperial privileges of the Archbishopric of Riga, stated that the said Archbishopric was and shall ever be a fief of the Holy Roman Empire, and took the Archbishopric under his royal protection (von Bunge 1857, no. 1338). During Lent, the king met with the envoy of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order and Albrecht of Dubá, a brother in the Bohemian bailiwick of the Knights. Wenceslas demanded that the ongoing legal process at the papal curia should be transferred to the imperial chamber court. At the same time, he suggested that replacing the current archbishop with Duke Otto II of Pomerania-Stettin should resolve the dispute. The representatives of the Knights agreed with Wenceslas' plan and confirmed this agreement in writing (von Bunge 1859, no. 1369<sup>3</sup>). The idea to accept the king's offer and end the conflict with Otto's advancement to the Archbishopric of Riga may have been acceptable to the Knights, because Otto's father, duke Swantibor had entered the service of the Teutonic Order in 1389 and pledged to fight for them against the King of Poland during a ten-year period (Auge 2009, 62).

In late September 1393, Pope Boniface IX moved John of Sinten to the seat of Titular-Patriarch of Alexandria and appointed John of Wallenrode as the new Archbishop of Riga (in office 1393–1418; † 1419). John of Wallenrode was a cousin of Grand Master Conrad of Wallenrode, who had died in the summer of 1393. John of Wallenrode joined the Teutonic Order immediately after his consecration as archbishop. In exchange for his appointment, the Knights relinquished to the pope all the income they had collected from the Archdiocese of Riga during the 3 years of its occupation (Jähnig 1970, 14–18).

The aforementioned events show how the efforts of Wenceslas failed. The Teutonic Order had considered his solution quite feasible at first, but their remarkable success at the papal curia overshadowed the king's proposal. In December 1393, the envoys of Wenceslas and Swantibor arrived at the residence of the Grand Master in Malbork (Marienburg) and were surprised to meet the new archbishop of Riga. The king was displeased; he accused the Teutonic Knights of breaking their promises and declared that the acceptance John of Wallenrode as Archbishop of Riga meant the removal of

an imperial fief from the Holy Roman Empire (von Bunge 1859, no. 1369; Jähnig 1970, 19). By removal from the empire, the king likely meant that the Archbishopric of Riga, which was an imperial fief, was taken away from the rightful holder (in this case archbishop John of Sinten) and given over to someone who lacked royal recognition of holding the fief (Krieger 1979, 87–89). Wenceslas thus declared that he continued to recognize John of Sinten as the only lawful Archbishop of Riga.

Grand Master Conrad of Jungingen (in office 1393–1407) dispatched envoys to Prague in early 1394 to explain his actions to the king. The envoys were to claim that Teutonic Order had not broken its promises to the king because the Grand Master had never officially submitted his dispute with archbishop John of Sinten to the judicial authority of the king. Moreover, the Teutonic Order was obliged to follow the decisions of the pope, who had always appointed the Archbishops of Riga. Furthermore, the Grand Master questioned the status of the archbishopric as a fief of the Holy Roman Empire. Nevertheless, his envoys presented Wenceslas with the official notice of Pope Boniface IX to the king on the appointment of John of Wallenrode (von Bunge 1859, no. 1369). Such an official notice to the king was customary when popes appointed bishops, which held imperial fiefs (Bolte 2012, 202). Therefore, the Teutonic Order essentially recognized the status of the Archbishop of Riga as vassal of the King of the Romans.

Wenceslas decided to recognize John of Wallenrode as the lawful archbishop of Riga, but emphasized that the archbishopric was and will forever be a fief of the empire (von Bunge 1859, no. 1369 and 1374). Wenceslas' recognition of John of Wallenrode likely stems from the fact that the former archbishop, John of Sinten, was not keen on disputing the pope's decision regarding his removal from the chair of Riga. Duke Swantibor and King Wenceslas likely realized that the matter was settled and pursued no further action.

### **Wenceslas as liege: the second attempt to establish Otto in Riga**

The Master of the Livonian Branch of the Teutonic Order presumed that the dispute with the church of Riga would end with the arrival of the new archbishop. Therefore, he lifted the occupation of the archdiocese and freed the canons from captivity. The canons, however, refused to recognize a member of the Teutonic Knights as archbishop and fled Livonia (Glauert 2004, 284; Jähnig 1970, 19). Because the pope had clearly shown his preference for the Knights, the canons sought support from the Holy Roman Empire. They likely contacted Duke Swantibor of Pomerania-Stettin, who may still have wished to obtain the office of Archbishop of Riga for his son Otto.

In October or November 1394, the canons of Riga and John of Sinten gathered at the court of King Wenceslas in Prague and elected Duke Otto II of Pomerania-Stettin as coadjutor (i.e. assistant-archbishop and successor in office) to the Archbishop of Riga (von Bunge 1859, no. 1366, 1385 and 1430). Otto pledged his allegiance to the King of the Romans and received the archbishopric as an imperial fief from the hands of the king (von Bunge 1859, no. 1366). Otto thereby obtained princely lordship over the territory of the archbishopric. It is unclear whether John of Sinten resigned from the position of archbishop thereafter, or whether he only relinquished his princely lordship to Otto while retaining his clerical office. Regardless, Otto was not consecrated archbishop and remained a layman.<sup>4</sup> John of Sinten, on the other hand, received upkeep in the Duchy of Pomerania-Stettin until his death in 1397. The canons



and vassals of Riga, which had fled Livonia, also found temporary upkeep in the duchy (von Bunge 1859, no. 1384, 1388 and 1397; Koppen [1889] (1967), 93; Jähnig 1970, 21–23).

Thus, by enfeoffing Otto with the Archbishopric of Riga, King Wenceslas renounced his earlier recognition of John of Wallenrode. Otto's father, Swantibor, likely asked the king to change his mind regarding the recognition of John of Wallenrode. During the first half of 1394, Swantibor and his brother Bogislaw VII (ca. 1355–1404) sought to attain the lordships of Beeskow and Storkow in Lower Lusatia. Although Swantibor could muster the support of King Wenceslas, he was again unable to make his efforts bear fruit (Zdrenka 1995, 167, 180–81; Wehrmann 1908, 640). The failure of his Lusatian enterprise may have made him even more eager to take up the Rigan matter once more.

For King Wenceslas, the year 1394 had been an unpleasant one. Bohemian barons, dissatisfied with his reign, began cooperating with his cousin Jobst, Margrave of Moravia (1351–1411), who hoped to become King of Bohemia. On 8 May 1394, the conspirators imprisoned Wenceslas and seized power. The king's brother, Duke John of Gorlitz (1370–1396), and Duke Swantibor of Pomerania-Stettin took up arms in order to free Wenceslas from captivity. In late July, troops under the command of Rupert III (1352–1410), son of the Elector of the Palatinate, arrived to support them. Negotiations led to Wenceslas' release in August, but did not bring about an ease of tensions in Bohemia; the king's refusal to accept the demands of the Bohemian barons actually intensified the conflict even further (Hlaváček 2013, 122–32; Lindner 1880, 187–228). Duke Swantibor proved his loyalty to the king through participation in summer battles; he could now enjoy bigger influence at the royal court than ever before.

On 14 March 1395, Wenceslas named the Kings of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Poland; Archbishops of Trier, Mainz, Cologne, and Magdeburg; Dukes of Pomerania-Stettin, Mecklenburg, and Guelders; the towns of Lubeck, Stralsund, Riga, and Tartu (Dorpat); and the vassals of the Bishops of Riga and Tartu as guarantors of Otto's rights and privileges. He thereby authorized military action by all of the above and their allies against anyone who violated Otto's privileges or prevented him from exercising his lordship over his new fief (von Bunge 1859, no. 1368; Diestelkamp 2001, no. 222).

Having acquired the king's support, Otto's camp began to woo the imperial princes. The canons of Riga travelled around Germany in early 1395 and justified Otto's legitimacy to several imperial princes. The canons claimed that the appointment of John of Wallenrode as Archbishop of Riga was void, since it had been achieved through bribery, and accused the Knights of removing the Archbishopric of Riga, an imperial fief, from the empire. After all, the Knights were preventing Otto from exercising his rule over his fief. Swantibor's brother and co-ruler Duke Bogislaw VII of Pomerania-Stettin, Duke Ulrich I of Mecklenburg-Stargard, Duke Stephan III of Bavaria-Ingolstadt, Duke Wilhelm of Guelders and Julich, Duke Wilhelm of Berg and Bishop Friedrich of Utrecht wrote letters to the Grand Master in favor of Otto (von Bunge 1859, no. 1370–74).

Raising complaints against the Teutonic Order in front of the imperial princes was a shrewd diplomatic move. The Teutonic Knights relied on the attendance of European nobility in their yearly campaigns against the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Paravicini 1989). The Union of Krewo, signed in 1386, resulted in the conversion of Grand Duke Jogaila of Lithuania (1377–1392) to Christianity and the formation of a personal union



between Lithuania and Poland. After Jogaila ascended the throne of Poland under his Christian name Władysław II (1387–1434), he began to accuse the Teutonic Order of disrupting his efforts of peaceful mission among his pagan subjects in Lithuania. The Knights countered this claim by asserting that Władysław II and Vytautas, his successor as Grand Duke of Lithuania (1392–1430), were not ‘true Christians’ (Boockmann 1975, 52–80). The gradual disappearance of the pagan enemy and the growing appeal of the anti-Turkish crusade led to a decrease in the interest of European noblemen to participate in the crusades organized by the Teutonic Knights (Paravicini 1989, 30–34; Sarnowsky 2011, 14–17). A lot of the noblemen who went to Prussia as crusaders came from the German lands of Holy Roman Empire. The Teutonic Order needed to keep a good reputation among German princes and noblemen in order to ensure their continued interest in visiting Prussia as crusaders. Therefore, the accusations raised by Otto’s supporters, that the Knights were violating imperial rights affected the reputation of the Teutonic Order in Germany and decreased their chances of recruiting crusaders.

Grand Master Conrad of Jungingen responded to the allegations of Otto’s supporters with a series of letters to the imperial princes in April 1395. He emphasized that only the pope had the right to appoint an Archbishop of Riga. Therefore, recognizing John of Wallenrode as the legitimate archbishop cannot be a violation of the rights of the Holy Roman Empire. The Teutonic Order itself was, after all, a member of the empire and was therefore bound to honor all imperial rights (von Bunge 1859, no. 1371 and 1373–74).

Wenceslas dealt a further blow to the Teutonic Order in the summer of 1395. He allied himself with King Władysław II of Poland, an outspoken enemy of the Knights. In return for military aid against rebellious Bohemian barons, Wenceslas fulfilled a long-held desire of Władysław II: he forbade the Teutonic Knights from organizing crusades against the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Lindner 1880, 214–15; Vetter 1912, 8–9 and 36–37). The Knights were appalled by this ban, which robbed them of the fundamental reason for being in Prussia: defending Christendom against the heathens. Conrad of Jungingen declared that he could not fulfill the king’s demands and sought assistance from the prince-electors of the Holy Roman Empire (Voigt 1861, no. 11–13; Militzer 2006, 181–82).

These actions marked a significant shift in Wenceslas relations with the Teutonic Order. Until this point, Wenceslas had presented himself as a supporter of the Knights in their struggle against Poland. However, it is important to note that the emperors and kings of the Luxembourg dynasty (Charles IV and his sons Wenceslas and Sigismund) did not follow a strict political doctrine of supporting the Teutonic Order. Instead, the Luxembourg monarchs shifted their support between Poland and the Knights to meet their current political needs. This shifting of support has been clearly shown with regard to Holy Roman Emperors Charles IV (1346–1378) (Arnold 1978, 1981) and Sigismund (1411–1437) (Hoensch 1997). Wenceslas’ approach differed from that of his father Charles IV and younger brother and later successor Sigismund in one important aspect: only he had the audacity to ban the crusading activities of the Knights.

Duke Swantibor of Pomerania-Stettin followed in the footsteps of his liege and entered into an alliance with the King of Poland in September 1395 (Zdrenka 1995, 167–68). This alliance was a breach of his previous arrangement with the Teutonic Order to provide military service against Władysław II in exchange for payment (Auge 2009, 62). As an explanation for switching sides the duke later claimed that the

Teutonic Knights, not he, had not broken the agreement when they declined to accept his son Otto as Archbishop of Riga (von Bunge 1859, no. 1426).

Beginning in September 1395, it became clear that Swantibor and Otto were preparing for war. Another ally for their cause was found in Livonia: Dietrich Damerow, Bishop of Tartu (in office 1379–1400), who had elected Duke Albrecht I († 1397) of Mecklenburg-Stargard as his coadjutor in early 1395 (Jähnig 2001, 150, 1970, 17–22; Girgensohn 1910, 46–53).<sup>5</sup> Duke Albrecht's election as coadjutor to the Bishop of Tartu was probably achieved in concordance with Duke Swantibor of Pomerania-Stettin. Duke Albrecht and his entourage arrived in Tartu in the summer of 1395. Otto joined him there in late autumn, having marched his troops through Poland, Lithuania, and Pskov. In March 1396, Otto, Albrecht, and Bishop Dietrich allied themselves with Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania and agreed to conquer the archbishopric of Riga in a joint venture (von Bunge 1859, no. 1413 and 1415).

In early 1396, the Grand Master advised the Land Commander of the Bohemian bailiwick of the Knights, Albrecht of Dubá (in office 1394–1402), to present Livonian affairs to King Wenceslas' confidants in a light favorable to the cause of the Knights (von Bunge 1859, no. 1404). The Grand Master gambled on the fairly large number of interest groups at Wenceslas' court (Hlaváček 1996, 105) and tried to assemble his own coterie of supporters who would help influence the king. The plan, however, did not have much success, due to the continued influence of Swantibor. In March 1396, Wenceslas took the Bishopric of Tartu under his protection and ordered Swantibor to back Otto and Dietrich Damerow against the Teutonic Order (von Bunge 1859, no. 1417–18).

The threat of a military invasion forced the Teutonic Order to alter their approach. At the end of July 1396, the Grand Master concluded a truce with the Grand Duke of Lithuania (von Bunge 1859, no. 1421–23). Immediately thereafter, the Livonian Master invaded the Bishopric of Tartu. After this preventive attack by the Knights, Otto could no longer hope to establish himself in the Archbishopric of Riga through force of arms and thus returned to Pomerania in the winter of 1396 (Girgensohn 1910, 68–71).

### Wenceslas as arbiter

The Teutonic Order presented their attack on the Bishopric of Tartu as a war waged by Archbishop John of Wallenrode – whom the Order had only given military support – to bring his disobedient suffragan Bishop Dietrich Damerow to heel (Voigt 1857, no. 87; von Bunge 1859, no. 1421, 1873, no. 2930; Fortstreuter 1961, 355–61). In late October 1396, the Grand Master dispatched an embassy to the court of King Wenceslas. The embassy's primary task was to deny the judicial power of the King of the Romans over the Archbishopric of Riga. The envoys were to emphasize that disputes between the Teutonic Order and the archbishops of Riga had traditionally been solved at the papal court, and stress that the Knights had no knowledge of the status of the archbishopric as an imperial fief. From the Order's point of view, the king had no right to judge matters concerning the archbishopric because no Holy Roman Emperor or King of the Romans before him had used his judicial authority there. On the other hand, the envoys were not instructed to suggest a similar course of action regarding the Bishopric of Tartu (von Bunge 1859, no. 1424–25). The Teutonic Knights were willing to recognize Wenceslas' judicial authority over their dispute with the Bishop of Tartu and at the same time firmly refused to recognize the king's judicial power over the Archbishopric of Riga.

Proceedings seemed to run according to the wishes of the Knights because Wenceslas no longer demanded that the dispute concerning the Archbishopric of Riga be solved at his court. However, this resolution may not indicate the diplomatic success of the Grand Master's envoys, but instead a lack of initiative from Duke Swantibor. Otto had abandoned his plans to acquire the archbishopric after his military defeat and his father had ceased to raise complaints against the Knights at the royal court.<sup>6</sup> This is a clear example of how the king's politics regarding the see of Riga depended upon the influence of Swantibor.

However, Bishop Dietrich Damerow of Tartu decided to appeal to Wenceslas. He had worked in the chancery of Emperor Charles IV in the 1370s (Jähnig 1980, 12–13; Moraw 1985, 38) and hoped to make use of his old contacts at the court. In the end, the king delegated the arbitration of the dispute to Heinrich Sorbom, Bishop of Warmia (in office 1373–1401) (von Bunge 1859, no. 1434).<sup>7</sup> This was likely a compromise between the king, Dietrich Damerow and the Teutonic Order, through which Wenceslas achieved at least nominal recognition of his judicial power, whereas the Order and the bishop were provided with an arbiter acceptable to both.

In February 1397, Wenceslas offered to sit with the prince electors in judgment over the disputes the Teutonic Order had with the King of Poland, with the Grand Duke of Lithuania, and with the Bishop of Tartu. This was to be done on a diet he planned to hold at Wrocław (Breslau) in 24 June 1397 (von Bunge 1859, no. 1439). This proposal likely did not arise from Wenceslas' sudden interest in Prussia and Livonia. Rather, it was meant to convince the electors that he was willing to fulfill the duties of the King of the Romans and fend for the interests of the Teutonic Order. Not fulfilling his royal duties, as judge, resolver of conflict, and guarantor of peace were the main complaints the prince-electors raised against Wenceslas, and which ultimately led to his deposition in 1400 (Gaus 1987, 21–34; Hanisch 1978, 276–77). The Grand Master declined Wenceslas' offer and reminded the king that his royal judge-delegate was already engaged in solving their dispute with the Bishop of Tartu (von Bunge 1859, no. 1440).

## Conclusion

Wenceslas' initial attempt to appoint Otto to the see of Riga cannot be considered as a deliberative move against the Teutonic Knights. The Teutonic Order was reluctant to let Wenceslas take the role of judge over their dispute with the Archbishopric of Riga. Still, one has to remember that Wenceslas' proposal to end the conflict by appointing the son of an ally of the Knights as the new archbishop was initially considered as feasible by the representatives of the Grand Master. Wenceslas' solution lost its attractiveness only when the Knights managed to raise one of their own as archbishop with the help of the pope.

During the second phase of the conflict, from autumn 1394 to summer 1396, Wenceslas performed the role of liege. He enfeoffed Otto with the archbishopric and gave legitimacy to the efforts of establishing him in Riga through force of arms. At the same time, Wenceslas remained politically passive in the whole matter. The king had apparently no desire to be personally involved in the conflict over Riga.

This would explain why the Teutonic Knights did not see him as their enemy and were instead diplomatically active in his court during the whole period under consideration. The Grand Master repeatedly attempted to convince the king of the rightfulness of his point of view. Alas, the Knights could not effectively counter the influence of duke

Swantibor at the court. Besides, the Teutonic Order offered no support against Bohemian barons, which led Wenceslas lean toward Duke Swantibor of Pomerania-Stettin and King Władysław II of Poland, who assisted him in his fight against the barons, were therefore held in higher regard by Wenceslas than the Teutonic Knights.

Wenceslas role as arbiter or peacemaker of the conflict over Riga was limited to those who sought his judgment. Since Swantibor and Otto did not, he could only hope to make peace between Bishop Dietrich Damerow of Tartu and the Teutonic Order. Here again we see Wenceslas' lack of interest toward the matter. His volition was to keep the nominal position of judge-arbiter, whereas the actual peace-making process was delegated to the Bishop of Warmia, who was apparently chosen by the opposing sides and not by the king.

Therefore, Wenceslas' activities regarding the archbishopric of Riga seem to have been solely due to Duke Swantibor of Pomerania-Stettin, who enjoyed influence at his court. This becomes especially clear when we consider that Wenceslas lost his interest in the archbishopric as soon as Swantibor stopped seeking assistance from him. The king supported the duke in order to strengthen his ties with him and not out of any personal interests in Livonia or negative feelings toward the Teutonic Order.

## Notes

1. Hellmann (1989, 29–32) avoids discussing Wenceslas' motives.
2. Lidnder gives a summary and cites two passages of this unpublished letter. The letter in its preserved form bears no date, but it must have been written sometime between early summer 1392 (when John of Sinten first contacted King Wenceslas) and September 1393 (when the pope removed John of Sinten from the see of Riga to the office of Titular-Patriarch of Alexandria).
3. For the correct dating of the document see Jähnig (1970, 19).
4. Lindner (1880, 273–5), Girgensohn (1910, 47–48), and Jähnig (1970, 19–20) claim that John of Sinten relinquished his claim on the Archbishopric of Riga after Otto's election and Otto thought of himself as the only rightful archbishop. Glauert (2004, 284–86), on the other hand, does not take a clear stance on the question. Several sources hint that John of Sinten may actually have perceived himself as the rightful Archbishop of Riga until his death in 1397, whereas Otto of Pomerania-Stettin was only a coadjutor. When John witnessed a testament of one of the vassals of the Archbishopric of Riga in 1395, he was called 'the old archbishop of the holy church of Riga' (*den olden erzbischof der hiligen kerken to Rige*) (LUB 4, no. 1388). The anonymous continuator of the Detmar-Chronicle states that after John died in 1397, those canons of Riga, who did not recognize John of Wallenrode, chose a new archbishop, whose name was not mentioned (Koppen [1889] (1967), 93). Furthermore, Otto of Pomerania-Stettin did not use the title of Archbishop-elect of Riga, but called himself 'head and elected lord of the holy church and principality (*hochstift*) of Riga' (LUB 4, no.1413).
5. Albrecht's elder brothers and co-rulers John II († 1416) and Ulrich I († 1417) were keen to secure him with another lordship.
6. Duke Swantibor declared that the Teutonic Knights had broken their peace with him, when they impeded his son Otto from attaining the see of Riga (LUB, vol. 4, no. 1426–7 and 1430–1). It seems that although Otto had relinquished his claims on Riga, his father felt dishonored by his defeat and tried to regain his honor through a diplomatic confrontation with the Teutonic Order.
7. Heinrich Sorbom had also worked in the chancery of Charles IV in the 1370s. See Kopiec and Glauert (2001).

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