

THE GERMAN ORDER AND PRUSSIAN SOCIETY :  
A NOBLE CORPORATION IN CRISIS, 1410-1466

~~PRUSSIAN SOCIETY AND THE GERMAN ORDER:  
AN ARISTOCRATIC CORPORATION IN CRISIS c. 1410-1466~~

Thesis presented for the Degree of  
PhD of the University of London

by

MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER BENNET BURLEIGH

Bedford College, University of London

May 1982

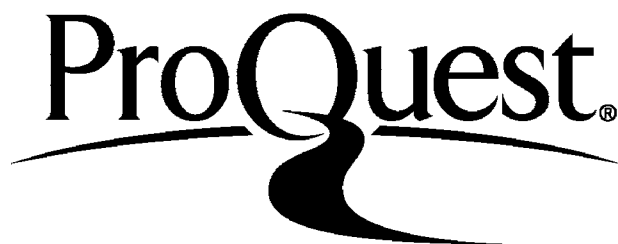
ProQuest Number: 10098432

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10098432

Published by ProQuest LLC(2016). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to use the exceptionally rich archives of the German Order to reveal something of the actuality of life in an aristocratic ecclesiastical corporation in society and under stress between c. 1410 and 1466. It differs from previous histories of the Order in that it attempts to combine analysis of long-term social change with a narrative of political events.

The first chapter attempts to characterise German peasant society on the Marienburger Werder in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It seeks to give precision to social and economic relationships and argues that peasant communal organisation and powers of resistance to seigneurial coercion were not retarded in medieval Prussia. The final part of the chapter tries to suggest some of the major contrasts between German and Prussian peasants.

The second chapter is concerned with the social origins of the brethren of the Order; the way in which power was exercised and finally, with the quality of life enjoyed by members of the Order. The third chapter begins with an assessment of the social, economic and political consequences for Prussian society of the four major wars between the Order and Poland of 1410-1433. It then considers the Order's increased fiscal demands and the severer insistence upon its rights occasioned by war and the consequently sharpened hostility of Prussian

society to the alien regime of the Order.

The fourth chapter attempts to bring precision to the view expressed in the fifteenth century as well as by later historians that the Order was in need of reform in the later Middle Ages. It tries to show what was considered to be wrong and how members of the Order - including the rebels in the three Chapters of Königsberg, Balga and Brandenburg - planned to reform the corporation. Finally, chapter five examines the role of the Prussian Estates and the formation of an alliance of townsmen and the landed classes designed to safeguard their privileges against encroachments on the part of the bankrupt lordship. The sequel was rebellion against the Order and a longing for the long-range lordship of the Poles.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Table of Contents	4
Introduction and Acknowledgements	7
A note on money	11
Chapter One <u>ORDERS OF MEN: THE GERMAN AND PRUSSIAN</u> <u>PEASANTS</u>	13
(1) German Peasant Society in the commandery of Marienburg in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.	13
(2) Prussian Peasant Society	54
Chapter Two <u>THE ANATOMY OF AN ARISTOCRATIC CORPORATION</u>	
(1) An Abode for the German nobility: origins and admission of the brethren	73
(2) Oligarchic Rule: the Grand Master and the <u>Grossgebietiger</u>	80
(3) The Way of Life	99
(4) Last Exit	117
Chapter Three <u>THE MAKING OF A TYRANNY</u>	137
Part I <u>War, defeat and the post-Tannenberg agrarian</u> <u>crisis</u>	138
(1) Some contrasts of fortune	138
(2) The disasters of war 1410-1414	142
(3) Crop failure and plague	149
(4) The Tannenberg Crisis, the bailiwicks of the Order and the late medieval agrarian depression	151

	<u>Page</u>
(5) Taxation	155
(6) The Eye of the Storm: the deposition of Grand Master Heinrich von Plauen	157
(7) The Wars of 1422 and 1431-1433: devastation and incompetence	161
(8) War weariness	170
Part II <u>The Making of a Tyranny</u>	172
(9) The style of the regime	172
(10) The Policy of the Order towards landed property and the peasantry	178
(11) Fishing	188
(12) The proximity of houses of the Order to the towns	191
(13) The towns, mills	194
(14) Trade, protection and life on the frontier	196
(15) Trade, taxation and competition	199
(16) Interference in the government of the towns	205
Chapter Four <u>DISORDER IN THE ORDER</u>	227
(1) The Criticisms	227
(2) Control	231
(3) Rebellion	255
Chapter Five <u>THE UNMAKING OF A LORDSHIP: THE PRUSSIAN ESTATES AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ORDER</u>	277
(1) Men of Iron: the mercenaries and the sale of Marienburg	277
(2) Who were the Estates?	281
(3) The Development of the Estates: legislation, foreign policy and taxation	289

	<u>Page</u>
(4) The Formation of the Prussian Union and the response of the Order	298
(5) Diplomacy, violence and the drift to war	317
(6) The Order and the Estates evaluated	341
 Bibliography	 357
(1) Archival manuals and bibliographies	357
(2) Unpublished sources	357
(3) Published sources	358
(4) Literature	360

## INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although the study of the German Order in Prussia has been, and continues to be a major preoccupation of German and Polish medievalists, there has been no attempt to write a political and social history of the Order and Prussian society in the first half of the fifteenth century. The work of C. Krollmann, published in 1932<sup>1</sup>, while being a major work of synthesis by a considerable scholar, suffers from a lack of references and certain concessions that the author made to the spirit of his time. F.L. Carsten's Origins of Prussia<sup>2</sup>, although deserving of more notice from scholars of the Order than it has received is concerned with long-term social changes in which the German Order and political events in general are incidental. More recently, there have been biographies of individual Grand Masters by Nöbel<sup>3</sup>, Lückcrath<sup>4</sup> and Murawski<sup>5</sup>. However, with the exception of the latter's masterly study of Konrad von Erlichshausen, these works have been principally concerned with the external relations of the Ordensstaat.

In addition to its more local ambitions, the present work attempts to use the exceptionally rich unpublished sources of the Order to reveal something of the detailed actuality of life in an aristocratic ecclesiastical corporation in society and under stress over a relatively short period of time. The nature of the sources used - unpublished letters written between members of the Order - allows us to enter into the world



of a group of men, and in a very immediate way, whose ethos was one of personal anonymity. Wherever possible, I have tried to support the inevitably anecdotal results with the 'harder' evidence provided by sources more familiar, or quantitatively accessible, to medievalists concerned with other parts of Europe. Where I have thought it necessary to use quantitative material or to intrude some semblance of a narrative of events, I attempted to subordinate my text to the main analysis.

Many people have helped me in my work. First, I would like to thank the Director, Dr. Friedrich Benninghoven and all of his colleagues at the Geheimes Staatsarchiv, West Berlin for being such splendid and courteous hosts during my research in Berlin. I am particularly indebted to Dr. B. Jähnig and Herren C. Holz, H. Padovani and Detlaf Koblitz for their daily kindnesses and their efficient delivery of material to me. Only those aware of how the 'OBA' are catalogued and stored will fully appreciate their labours on my behalf. I should also like to thank Prof. P.G. Thielen and Dr. Heide Wunder for their friendly interest in my work and the trouble they took in order to obtain material for me.

My supervisor Prof. F.R.H. Du Boulay has been both a constant source of encouragement and a stern critic. That this work is completed is in large part due to his unfailing interest in it. A number of other friends have either given me material assistance or endured endless monologues on the German Order. I would like to mention Anastasia Anrep, Edward Chaney, Prof. W.W. Hagen, Robert

and Elke Wirth, Jan de Wit and my mother. I should like Anne to accept its dedication.

Notes to Introduction

1. C. Krollmann, Politische Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen (Königsberg 1932).
2. F.L. Carsten, The Origins of Prussia (Oxford 1954).
3. W. Nöbel, Michael Kuchmeister Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1414-1422 Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1969), 5.
4. C.A. Lúckerath, Paul von Rusdorf Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1422-1441 Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1969), 15.
5. K.E. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens unter dem Hochmeister Konrad von Erlichshausen 1441-1449 Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft, ed. HeimpeI. Hubatsch, Kaehler, Schramm (Göttingen 1953), 10/11.

A NOTE ON MONEY

The Prussian Mark was divided into the following units:

1 Mark = 4 firdung = 24 scot = 60 shillings = 720 pennies

(The Mark was roughly equivalent to an English noble, or 6s 8d., till 1410; thereafter to about a third of an English noble. See Ch. 3, p. 155 below).

The following abbreviations have been used:

m	Mark
f	firdung
sc	scot
s	shilling
d	denar

CHAPTER ONE

ORDERS OF MEN: THE GERMAN  
AND PRUSSIAN PEASANTS

CHAPTER ONE

ORDERS OF MEN: THE GERMAN AND PRUSSIAN PEASANTS

1. German Peasant Society in the commandery of Marienburg in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

The land between the Vistula and Nogat rivers known as the Grosse Werder (Old German Wöhrd, Wehrd = island<sup>1</sup>), has a very long history of human settlement. It was once held that the area was an unsettled swamp before the advent of the German Order and German peasant settlers at the turn of the 13th century. But the labours of historical geographers such as Otto Schlüter have shown that a thousand years before men lived on such elevated areas as existed in a region that was for the most part either on or below sea level.<sup>2</sup> The Grosse Werder was certainly inhabited in the pagan period; a pagan temple is known to have existed near Gross-Lichtenau, the river Schwente ('holy river') owes its name to some long forgotten practitioners of paganism, and traces of human settlement from both the La Tène era and the Roman period have been established at Ladekop.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, behind a German-sounding placename, there often lies an earlier Slav settlement; for example, the name Tannsee was formed from the older Czanse.<sup>4</sup> Written reference to these older inhabitants is sparse. A charter issued by Duchess Salome of Cujavia in 1309 suggests that part at least of the Werder was under cultivation, and the Handfeste for Klein-

Lichtenau says that the village was 'formerly inhabited by Polish people'.<sup>5</sup>

German settlement activity began at the turn of the 13th century. Under the Grand Commander Werner von Orseln (1315-1324), seventeen rent-paying villages were created, some ten of them on land probably hitherto uncultivated, and all - with the exception of Petirshagen - lying South of a line running NE from Dirschau to Tiegenhof. As Kasiske has shown, the settlement of the Werder was resumed in the 1330s, with the foundation of a group of villages - Schönhorst, Schönsee and Schönberg in the area between the Linau and Vistula rivers. Finally, in the 1340s and 1350s fresh settlements were established in the recently drained northern part of the Grosse Werder. As we shall see from a systematic examination of the Handfesten, the colonists were likely to have come from the older areas of settlement to the south rather from lands further afield or outside the Ordensstaat.<sup>6</sup>

With the exception of the witnesses, the only persons mentioned by name in the Handfesten were the 'Lokators' who invariably became the hereditary village mayors (Schulzen). In a couple of cases the Christian name is accompanied by a toponym. This is important since it enables us to establish with some degree of confidence the origins of at least one of the inhabitants of the village. It does not, of course, entitle us to speculate about the origins of the rest. The Handfeste for Fürstenwerder of 22 June 1352 mentions a mayor called Hannus from Simonsdorff.<sup>7</sup> The village of Simonsdorff

lay approximately 22 km. South of Fürstenwerder and received its Handfeste on 21 June 1352.<sup>8</sup> This was not the date of the village's foundation. In the Handfeste for Alt-Munsterberg of 25 May 1323 the village of Simonsdorff was mentioned as forming one of Alt-Munsterberg's boundaries.<sup>9</sup> Simonsdorff had 35 Hufen, its Schulz Klaus received 3½ Hufen. The more northerly settlement at Fürstenwerder consisted of 64 Hufen with Hannus, one time inhabitant of Simonsdorff receiving 6 Hufen. A similar movement from the older settlements to the northern extremities of the commandery can be seen in the case of the village of Tiegenort at the confluence of the Tiege and Linau rivers. The Handfeste issued on 31 October 1349 mentions 'Matys the son of the old Starost in Palschow'.<sup>10</sup> The village of Palschau lay some 22 km. SW of Tiegenort and had received its Handfeste on 25 November 1344.<sup>11</sup> The reference to Matys' father is of interest. The title Starost is Polish and means 'foreman'. It was used only in Poland, Pomerelia and Pomesania to describe the headman of a Slav village.<sup>12</sup> By the time the Handfeste for Palschau was issued, the village had a German Schulz called Dietrich and not a Slav Starost. There were evidently pressures at work which resulted in the son of the Slav village headman taking himself off to Tiegenort. There he and his fellow inhabitants received 10 Hufen as a Zinsgut, with payment of rent to commence in 1352, three years after the issuance of the Handfeste.

For the remaining villages the Handfesten are not so forthcoming. They remark laconically that the



Schulz is called 'lange Hannus', Claus or Heinrich. In seven Handfesten pairs of Lokators are named. In three cases they were said to be brothers and in one case brothers-in-law.<sup>13</sup> One of them, Friderich held the mayoralty with 9 Hufen. He gave his brother-in-law Meynekin 1 Hufe in return for the latter's renunciation of his fraction of the profits of the lower jurisdiction.<sup>14</sup>

In a few cases the Lokator's name adhered to the village, thus Peter Bare (Bärwalde), Reymer (Reymerswald), Brun (Brunau) and Peter (Petershagen). As examples of reverse name formation - where the village name adhered to the person - one may cite Heinrich Monsterberg and Ditrich Irregang.<sup>15</sup> The Handfesten for Damerau and Neuteichdorf mention Lokators from further afield, Volprecht from Holland and Niclause also from Holland. Finally, the Lokator's name in Schoneberg, Iocob Lantmesser, probably reflects his occupation or particular skill.<sup>16</sup>

In return for his pains, the Lokator received both a property and an office. In half a dozen cases the former was expressly said to consist of the tenth Hufe. In almost every other village, the Schulzengut represented an attempt to give the Schulz a tenth of the total number of Hufen. For example, in Mirow (33 Hufen) the Schulz received three rent-free Hufen, in Schadewalt (40 Hufen) four rent-free Hufen, in Barendt (50 Hufen), five Hufen and in Tiegenhagen (60 Hufen) the Schulz received 6 Hufen.<sup>17</sup>

Both the mayoralty and the land that went

with it could be both purchased and alienated at any time. For example, 'big Hannos' the Schulz in Petirshagen was said in the Handfeste to have purchased the mayoralty from the former Schulz Peter.<sup>18</sup> Rousselle mentions that in 1384 Marshal Konrad von Wallenrodt granted the Schulz Lorenz the mayoralty and five Hufen in the village of Biberstein (Gerdauen). Lorenz paid fifty Marks for the land and office or ten marks per Hufe. The remaining forty-five Hufen were sold for a total of fifty Marks or just over 1 Mark per Hufe. Lorenz was to ensure that the peasants brought a fresh piece of land under the plough each year.<sup>19</sup> The price per Schulzenhufe in this area of relatively late colonisation can be profitably compared with prices obtaining at approximately the same date in the commandery of Christburg. In 1395 Niclus Honigfelder bought the mayor's land in Altmark, a village founded in 1294. He paid the widow of the old Schulz one hundred and fifty Marks for six Hufen or twenty-five Marks per Hufe.<sup>20</sup>

A few examples of the multiple occupancy of the village mayoralty have already been noticed. While being a convenient arrangement for spreading the cares and risks involved in the initial settlement of a village, multiple mayoralties could also lead to complications between the Order and its subject. Put briefly, the Order wanted to deal with as few people as possible. Hence in the Landesordnung of 1444 it was announced:

where there are many mayors in a village,  
the lordship (hirschafft), shall choose  
the ablest (den tuchtigesten kysen),  
with the advice of the community<sup>21</sup>

This problem became particularly acute when minors succeeded to the Schulzengut. On 22 May 1448 the Vogt in Stuhm wrote to the Grand Master concerning a complicated succession in an un-named village. The wife of a Schulz had died, leaving a seven year old boy from a previous marriage to a man called Segemunt and a girl from her marriage to the Schulz. The boy, supported by a cousin from the Strassburg area, claimed a fifth of the Schulzenamt, his half-sister and step-father claimed a third. The Vogt had chosen six men to value the property. It was worth three hundred and fifty Marks, but had debts of two hundred and thirty Marks. He also recognised that the boy was 'the true heir to the court'. What concerned him (and the six men) was that should the Grand Master choose the boy as mayor, the court would be reduced to nothing (czu nichte wurde). If the Grand Master settled for that option, the boy would have to pay his half-sister and step-father forty-five Marks in yearly instalments of three Marks. If, on the other hand, the Grand Master maintained the step-father as Schulz then he would have to pay the boy seventy-five Marks at five Marks every year. The Vogt hoped that the dispute would be cleared up quickly so that the mayoralty would not remain vacant.<sup>22</sup>

In a few of the Handfesten, the mayors received important supplementary privileges. The Schulz in Gross Lichtenau received the right to hold a free market 'to buy and to sell'.<sup>23</sup> Diethmar Irregang, the Schulz in Irregang, and his heirs, received the right to run an inn

with the appurtenant five Morgen of land in return for a rent of one Mark and a pound of saffron.<sup>24</sup> Claus the Schulz and his heirs in the village of Schadewalt were entitled to fish in the Nogat 'mit engelen und mit stabewaten' to satisfy the requirements of their own table. So as to discourage Claus from satisfying the needs of his own purse, and to preserve fish-stocks, the sort of tackle he could use was exactly circumscribed: 'a rod and line and a pole and a net' seems a reasonable rendering of the phrase used.<sup>25</sup> Sometimes the Handfesten specified how many and what sort of people were to go fishing on behalf of the Schulz. For example, Hannus Slich the Schulz in Tyfensee (Kr. Danziger-Niederung) could send one of his servants but no one else.<sup>26</sup>

These privileges were in the way of compensation for the risks involved in the occupation of a village. The risks were considerable. In the early fifteenth century, the Marshal wrote to the Grand Master concerning 'Merten', the nephew of his subordinate the Master of Amber (Bernsteinmeister), who, accompanied by brothers and six sisters and 'many people' had tried to settle a number of villages in Nadrauen on the edge of the Wilderness. The Marshal reported that the other settlers had gone off leaving Merten alone with his six sisters and on the verge of ruin. He asked the Grand Master to permit Marten to remain there for upto three more years until the latter knew where he was going.<sup>27</sup> Not all mayors had such powerful connections.

The mayors were also important to the Order's

strategic calculations and as organisers of peasant labour. Only two of the Handfesten under consideration contain clauses relating to the military duties of the Schulz. The Handfeste for Broske cryptically states that Hannos the Schulz 'shall do such service as the other Schulzen from the Werder are accustomed to do'.<sup>28</sup> The Handfeste for Eichwald was more forthcoming - Niclos the Schulz and his heirs had to serve with 'one of their horses in the victualling of our brothers when, as often, and wherever they are told'.<sup>29</sup> Contrary to the opinion of Patze, who has said that one of the duties of the Schulz was 'service with a horse and heavy armour',<sup>30</sup> F. Benninghoven has convincingly demonstrated that the Schulzen served lightly armed in an escort capacity, guarding the baggage or special pieces of equipment such as sledges or cannon.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, the Schulzen sometimes appear as organisers of peasant labour. For example, in 1395 the Grand Master wrote to the commander of Elbing instructing him to collect 75 men who were to be shipped to Labiau for four weeks ditch-digging in return for a half Mark expenses and piece-rate wages. The commander was also to send one of his brothers and two Schulzen 'who shall be there with the 75 men'.<sup>32</sup> Again, in a letter dated 4 May 1446 the commander of Elbing said that he had gathered together some of the 'head Schulzen' to hear a request from the Grand Master for 500 Marks or 80 men and 150 Marks to repair a damaged dike by Wiedau. The Schulzen had agreed to supply the 80 men but had asked for a postponement

of the payment of the 150 Marks 'because the people are poor at this time'. The commander asked the Grand Master to inform him concerning the equipment needed and when the work-force was to set off 'so that we can get them ready in time so that no negligence occurs'. The Schulzen were to accompany the men in a supervisory capacity.<sup>33</sup>

The character of the Schulzenamt has become the subject of recent controversy. In an ambitious attempt to reassert the primacy of class relations as the determinant of historical change, R. Brenner has discerned a contrast between the strength of communal organisations amongst the peasantries of eastern and western Germany. Whereas the latter 'had succeeded ... in constituting for itself an impressive network of village institutions for economic regulation and political self-government', in eastern Germany, 'peasant economic co-operation and, in particular, the self-government of peasant villages appear to have developed only to a relatively small extent'. In his search for the causes of peasant weakness in the face of 'seigneurial attacks', Brenner lights upon the Schulz 'the village officer who originally organised the settlement as the representative of the lord and who retained his directing political role in the village (either as the lord's representative or as hereditary office-holder) throughout the medieval period'.<sup>34</sup> This view has been attacked by H. Wunder:

... it would be erroneous to conclude that the Schulz, by combining communal and seigneurial authority, impeded the development of independent political institutions

at the village level. It was his hereditary status which alone enabled him to resist becoming a mere agent of the lord. On the contrary, Schulz and peasant community appear as a unit in which the Schulz acts as the spokesman of peasant interests and the leader of peasant protest during the middle ages and in the early modern period up to the age of reform<sup>35</sup>

In their respective concern to cast the Schulz in the role of either the village Quisling or the village Robespierre, both historians have underestimated the ambivalence inherent in the position of Schulz.

The Handfesten contain precise stipulations concerning the judicial competence of the Schulz. For example, in the Handfeste for Alt-Weichsel issued on 10 August 1338 both the profits of justice and those who were justiciable in the Schulz's court were carefully noted:

Also we grant to him the Schulzenamt in the selfsame village and the third penny in the higher and lower courts, but the other two parts with the highway justice we reserve to our brothers<sup>36</sup>

Prussian, Polish or Wendish tenants of the Order were justiciable in the Order's courts. Disputes involving either the latter groups or strangers and the village inhabitants were to be judged by the Schulz 'with our advice'. The lower jurisdiction covered matters involving penalties of up to four shillings.<sup>37</sup> The higher jurisdiction was crisply expressed in the formula 'the cutting off of hands and heads' (des halses und des hant abehawunge).<sup>38</sup> The Handfeste for Halberstadt specified that the Schulz had the 'lower jurisdiction over German

people'.<sup>39</sup> Three Handfesten give us some idea of the cases that concerned the Schulz. The Schulzen in Mirow, Marienau and Neuteichdorf were to settle disputes arising from the exchange or sale of Hufen involving outsiders and the village inhabitants.<sup>40</sup>

The Schulzen were responsible for the punctual and full payment of rents and dues by the villagers.<sup>41</sup> They were also expected to know which peasant owed what to the Order. For example, the Pfennigschuldbuch of the commandery of Christburg contains an entry for the village of Altstadt for 1410:

The peasants owe seigneurial oats  
the Schulz knows well who they are<sup>42</sup>

When the Order contracted to buy oats in the Marienburg commandery, the Schulzen figured prominently as securities for the delivery of the goods. For example, in 1403 four peasants from Nydow, Hanke Syffridt, Clauwis Keyser, Gyreke Gyselbrecht and Stobenberg contracted to supply the Order with 500 bushels of oats for just under 14 Marks. The Schulz Hanke Janusch was guarantor of the transaction and also agreed to deliver the oats.<sup>43</sup> In 1408 the three Schulzen in Petirshagen contracted to supply 2,000 bushels on behalf of an unspecified number of peasants. The three had received payment which, at the going rate of 2½ Marks per 100 bushels would have been 50 Marks.<sup>44</sup> Commonly, those contracting to supply the oats went surety for each other, with the Schulz guaranteeing the deal as a whole. For example, in 1408 five peasants from Leszewicz contracted to supply 600 bushels, including



Nicclus Granow the Schulz who had to supply 100. The securities were mutual (eyner ist borge vor den andern), but the Schulz was the principle security as far as the Order was concerned (der Schulz ist borge vor sy alle).<sup>45</sup> The extent of his liability in cases of default is unknown. Finally, the Schulzen sometimes appear as the men responsible for the delivery of peasant debts. For example, in the Pfennigschuldbuch there is an entry for the village of Arnoldisdorf under the year 1396:

The community owes four Marks, the  
Schulz shall deliver it<sup>46</sup>

The Order also addressed itself to the Schulzen when taxation was in the offing. The commander of Elbing held an assembly at Holland on 30 March 1432 to discuss the levying of a tax. The gathering of local worthies included the Schulzen and certain councillors from the villages.<sup>47</sup> His colleague in Balga did the same.<sup>48</sup>

The Schulz's favoured economic position - rent-free substantial holdings - was taken into account in the Order's tax valuations. He was assessed at 4 Scot. The prosperity of the Werder Schulzen is indicated by their higher tax assessment: they had to pay 6 Scot ( $\frac{1}{4}$  of a Mark). This was also reflected in the tax assessments of the Werder peasantry as a whole, they had to pay 4 Scot as opposed to the 2 Scot paid by peasants elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

As we shall see in the context of peasant land-holding, the Schulzen were part of the village rich. This gave them some confidence in their dealings with the Order. On 7 January 1449 the Vogt in Brathean wrote

in the following terms to the Grand Master:

... as your Grace wrote to me on behalf of the commander in Christburg concerning a horse which one of his peasants ran off with and which one of my Schulzen has, and that I would not go after it. Most worthy dear Lord Master your worthy Grace may please to know that the bearer of this letter has the horse, as he will clearly inform you by word of mouth. I sent two of my servants to him telling them to tell him that he should return the horse, and I have spoken with him myself. However, he answered me saying that your worthy Grace should take it from him, otherwise he would never return it without money<sup>50</sup>

The Schulzen were men who knew how to stand on their rights.

If the Schulz was the man to whom the Order turned to ensure the exaction of its dues and the fulfillment of contractual obligations, he was also the man responsible for the promulgation and enforcement of seigneurial policies. In the Constitutions for the peasants of the bishopric of Ermland of 12 March 1435, the Schulzen were held responsible for good order in the villages.<sup>51</sup> They were the eyes, ears and mouth of the lordship. They must report both the alienation and acquisition of property on pain of 10 Marks. They must apprehend runaway peasants and return them to the village. If they were negligent in the performance of this task (doran vorsumelich wirt seyn), they were to be held liable for the rent from the deserted Hufen until they either returned the peasant or found a replacement.<sup>52</sup> They had to inspect the village boundaries once a year. They had to report dice players to the Vogt. They must have the Constitutions read out three times a year 'so that no one may excuse themselves through uncertainty' (myt unwissenheit

nicht mogen entschuldigen). The successive Landesordnungen of 1427, 1441, 1444 and 1445 specified the duties of the Schulzen. For example in 1444, the Schulzen were held responsible for the proper observance of Holy days. They must report those who drank 'gildenbir' on Holy days within a month otherwise, 'he shall be regarded as an unfit Schulz and shall forfeit his office as Schulz'.<sup>53</sup> He was obliged to report those who drank in the inns at night on pain of  $\frac{1}{4}$  Mark. It was anticipated that this would result in difficulties:

whichever peasant troubles the Schulz  
or the inn-keeper with words or deeds  
shall forfeit his Hufen<sup>54</sup>

Trouble there would be if he reported those who played dice

We will that no one in the towns or villages, townsman or common man shall play dice. If anyone is caught they shall pay three good Marks and whoever permits that in his house also three good Marks. Likewise no peasant, in the towns or villages shall play with dice. If anyone disobeys, he shall suffer eight days in gaol with bread and water and whoever permits it shall give three good Marks. Except for 'bretspil' (board games such as draughts), as long as they do not play for big money (umme gross gelt spilen)<sup>55</sup>

All medieval farming required an element of collective coercion. Village by-laws existed in Prussia and were called Willkuren.<sup>56</sup> For example, the Ostpreussische Foliant 122 contains a Willkur for a village in the vicinity of Elbing.<sup>57</sup> It consists of thirty-one articles written in an early sixteenth century hand. The first three of these were concerned with bolstering the authority of the Schulz and with ensuring attendance at

the village court. The Schulz and the Ratleute were to be obeyed on pain of a fine of half a barrel of beer. Defaulters in the Schulz's court were to be fined on a scale rising from 2 to 8 'score' according to their reasons for non-attendance.<sup>58</sup> Most of the articles were concerned with the definition of collective obligations and individual rights. Article five envisaged a fine of 1 scot for those caught cutting their neighbour's grass with a scythe. The Schulz and the Ratleute had to inspect the village fences: whoever had failed to make adequate fences had to pay 1 scot for each hole discovered (so sal er geben von iczlichem loch 1 scot) and then had to repair the fence. Those who neglected their ditches had to pay 1 scot; those who allowed their livestock to stray into the cattle meadow or standing corn had to pay fines assessed according to the size of the beast concerned. Whoever allowed his pigs to stray on to the common had to pay two pence per pig 'which money the Schulz and Ratleute may drink'.

Finally, some reference must be made to the notion that the Schulzen were leaders of peasant resistance to seigneurial exploitation. For while, as Patze has said, 'the state manifested itself in the Schulzen',<sup>59</sup> the latter were still, socially speaking, peasants. For example, it was agreed at the Diet of Elbing in January 1441 at which the membership of the Prussian Union - an alliance of urban and landed interests - was discussed

... since the lordship asserted, that we have received and are still receiving ignoble people such as inn-keepers and

the like into our Union, it is agreed that we will nor shall receive any ignoble man, nor Tartars or Samlanders, inn-keepers, peasants or Schulzen or people of that sort into our Union and agreement<sup>60</sup>

This ambivalence in the position of Schulz may be illustrated at slightly greater length in the revolt of the peasants of the cathedral chapter of Ermland which broke out in 1440. The causes of the revolt - which broke out in the Kammeramt Mehlsack - can be seen in the conclusions of the sixteen arbitrators appointed by the Estates following the repeated breakdown of negotiations between the two parties promoted by the bishop of Ermland and Grand Master Konrad von Erlichshausen.<sup>61</sup> Essentially, the canons had tried to extort uncustomary labour services; the carrying and floating of timber, the carrying of clay to the brick-kilns and help with fishing.<sup>62</sup> These manifestations of the seigneurial entrepreneurial spirit should also be viewed in the context of the stiff curbs on peasant enterprise and kill-joy tone of the Landesordnung issued by Bishop Franz Kuhschalcz on 26 January 1427.<sup>63</sup> The Schulzen were forbidden to sell on the highways or to deal in salt, herring, cloth or oil in the villages. Instead, they had to tend their fields. In a letter to the Grand Master dated 18 February 1427, Bishop Franz noted that owing to the fact that 'certain peasants' were trading in these commodities in Danzig, the fields were being neglected and the townsmen ruined.<sup>64</sup> Beer had to be purchased in the nearest market town and nowhere else.

Adulterers, vagrants (umtreiber) and whores (uneliche weiber) were to be ejected from the towns and villages. Those who housed or protected the latter were to be fined ten Marks. The Schulzen were to receive the third penny from the fines resulting from the new articles.<sup>65</sup>

The spokesmen for the rebellious peasants were a group of Schulzen; Penczel von Heinrichaw, German von Luwterbeke, Helmyng vom Rosengarthen, Hans von Pluwten, Jacob von Plastewick 'and other Schulzen from the aforementioned cameramt Mehlsack'.<sup>66</sup> The arbitrators had decided that the Schulzen were responsible for acts of violence against the canons - they each had to pay a fine of a stone of wax. Their two accomplices Benedictus von der Gaile and Hans Scholcze from Plastewick had to pay half a stone of wax. Moreover the Schulzen and four peasants from each village had to come to the church at Frauenburg 'without belts, barefooted and bareheaded' to beg forgiveness for their misdeeds. At least one of the arbitrators, Tidemann Burgermaster from Culm had misgivings about the advisability of trying to exact a full pound of flesh. On 25 November 1441 he pointed out to the Elbing Diet the dangers inherent in public humiliation. He warned the canons that the 'exaction of such penalties may perhaps lead to greater trouble (grossen kreyg) amongst the peasants, so that one says to the other 'you are not as good as me, since you are without honour, you had to carry out a public punishment'.<sup>67</sup> Early in 1442 at the Diet at Marienburg,

the peasant spokesman Benedictus von der Gayle rejected the arbitrator's decision concerning labour services and countered a threat of force with the reply 'Yes dear Lords, we hope you won't attack us alone! and many other uppish and frivolous words which they spoke and used before the lords which were too long to write', with Benedictus adding 'Yes, I am old enough to suffer'.<sup>68</sup>

The canons responded to the peasant's walk-out by repeating their appeal to the Grand Master, their 'armed protector', for military assistance.<sup>69</sup> Possibly the canons' threat that they would seek their protection elsewhere pushed the Grand Master into more active support for their cause in the struggle with the peasants. Von Erlichshausen signalled his readiness to act by reminding the Diet of the chaos which had engulfed Bohemia as a consequence of softness on the part of the lordship.<sup>70</sup>

On 2 January 1442 Bishop Franz wrote to the Grand Master informing him that he had had forty of the peasants arrested in the course of a meeting designed to secure their adherence to the agreement reached at Elbing.<sup>71</sup> By 5 February a comprehensive settlement consisting of seventeen articles had been worked out. The peasants had to pay a fine of two hundred Marks to be paid in instalments of fifty Marks at Christmas over four years (c. 5). They were forbidden to hold unauthorised 'gatherings' on pain of forfeiture of their holdings and a fine of ten Marks (c. 5). The union and oaths which the peasants had made were declared null and void (c. 10).

The Schulzen were to swear oaths to the effect that they would be true to the canons, and they were to report whomever was disloyal or disobedient (c. 8). The wax fine had to be paid by Easter on pain of four Marks (c. 11). Any complaints that the peasants might have were to go to the bishop, who could then call upon the towns to act as arbitrators (c. 16). Finally, the peasants were freed from the clay carrying and the help with the fishing. The more dangerous floating of timber was closely defined. The Mehlsack peasants had to float 8 score of logs for fire-wood (borne ronen) from Allenstein to Frawenburg for use in the seigneurial bakery and brewery.<sup>72</sup>

The peasants occupied rent hides (Zinshufen), for which they owed rent in money and product. In about a third of the villages on the Werder the rent consisted of 1½ Marks and two hens, capons or fat geese. In the case of Neuteich it was anticipated that there might be difficulties supplying the four capons required so the villagers were permitted to substitute two old hens for each capon.<sup>73</sup> Three other villages paid a cash rent accompanied by a pound of pepper.<sup>74</sup> In all but two cases, the deviation from the 1½ Mark norm was a matter of a ½ Mark up or down. In one case we know why there were variations in the rent assessment. In the Handfeste for Liessau, two brothers received four free Hufen from the 44 Hufen total. The Order also granted them a little under 6 Hufen 'outside the dams' with two Hufen set aside for a chapel and one Hufe which went to the ferry-man



at Alt-Weichsel. The brothers had to pay a  $\frac{1}{2}$  Mark rent for each Hufe outside the dams and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Marks for each Hufe within.<sup>75</sup> The most favoured dates for the payment of rent were Christmas Day, Candlemas (2 February), and St. Martin's Day (11 November).

Many of the Handfesten stipulated that the villagers were to commence payment of rent only when a number of rent-free years had elapsed. For example, Liessau and Czans had two rent free years, Schoneberg, Petirshagen, Bärwalde five, Lyndenow six, Schönsee seven and Ruckenau ten. In a couple of cases a combination of free years and reduced rents were used as incentives; for example, the village of Marienau had three free years followed by payment of half the rent in the fourth year with full payment to commence in the fifth year.<sup>76</sup> It is worth noting - since the number of free years is often taken as an indication of the antiquity of the settlement - that only a fifth of the Werder villages received this privilege and that with one exception, the number of free years granted was small, suggesting that the villages were not new settlements.<sup>77</sup>

In addition to rents, the peasant holdings were also burdened with the tithe. This consisted of an amount of grain, referred to in the Handfesten as Messekorn, Messelohn or Dezem. In all but one case, it was levied on the individual Hufe. It was also levied regardless of whether there was a church or a priest in the village. In six villages the peasants had to go elsewhere to receive the sacrament: they paid their tithe to the

priest in the village where the services were held.<sup>78</sup>  
 Payment of the tithe was supposed to take place on St. Martin's day (11 November): suitably timed to enable the peasants to have threshed the new harvest. The village Schulz had the job of harassing the recalcitrant. In a Landesordnung issued in 1309 the Schulz was instructed to collect the tithe four weeks before and after 11 November - he was to threaten the recalcitrant with heavy penalties.<sup>79</sup>

In the following table the number of rent free Hufen accorded the village priest, the villages attached to churches elsewhere, the form and level of tithe due and the date on which it was supposed to be delivered are given.

<u>Village</u>	Number of priest's rent-free <u>Hufen</u>	<u>Tithe</u>	<u>Day due</u>
Neu Scharffau	3	1 bushel corn/ 1 bushel barley	-
Ladekop	4	1 bushel rye/ $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel oats	-
Marienau	4	$\frac{1}{2}$ bushel rye/ $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel oats	-
Tiege	2	$\frac{3}{4}$ bushel rye/ $\frac{3}{4}$ bushel oats	-

Czans	4	$\frac{1}{2}$ bushel rye/ $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel barley	-
Fürstenwerder	4	Same as above + 1 shilling 2 Feb. from each cottager + 6d. for the bell-ringers	
Mielenz	4	$\frac{1}{2}$ bushel rye/ $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel barley	
Alt-Weichsel		Same as above	
Barendt	4	Same as above	
Lesewicz	4		
Schönsee	4	$\frac{1}{2}$ bushel rye/ $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel oats	
Schadewalt	2	2 bushels rye/ 1 bushel oats	
Schoneberg	4		
Halbestadt		1 bushel wheat/ 1 bushel rye per plough	
Gnojau	4	$\frac{1}{2}$ bushel rye/ $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel barley	11 Nov
Cunczendorff	4	Same as above	
Wiedau		Same as above	
Neukirche	4		
Bärwalde	4	Same as above	11 Nov

Bysterfeld	Same as above	
Gross Lichtenau      6		
Tithe paying village/ <u>Tithe receiving church</u>		
<u>Niedau/Czans</u>	Same as above	
<u>Lindenau/Czans</u>	Same as above	11 Nov
<u>Broske/Neuteichdorf</u>	1 bushel barley	Christmas
<u>Neu Monsterberg/Barwalde</u>	$\frac{1}{2}$ bushel rye/ $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel barley + 1 shilling for the priest as 'schulerlon' + 6d for the bell-ringers.	11 Nov
<u>Monsterberg/Mielenz</u>	$\frac{1}{2}$ bushel corn/ $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel barley	
<u>Ruckenau/Marienu</u>	$\frac{1}{2}$ bushel rye/ $\frac{1}{2}$ bushel barley	

---

The village of Liessau had a chapel with two Hufen which was served by the priest in Lichtenau.<sup>80</sup>

Seventeen of the Werder Handfesten contain precise stipulations concerning labour services. The services mentioned were levied on the Hufen rather than on the inhabitants of them. In all seventeen cases the peasants had to work six days a year.<sup>81</sup> In six cases this was said to be at their own cost. As to the nature of the

service it was most likely to have been hay harvesting. The Handfeste for Kleine Lichtenau - which specified three days work in the first year and six days work in subsequent years - says that the service will be 'uff dem hoye'.<sup>82</sup> The peasants of Parsow had to perform six days 'heudinste'.<sup>83</sup> In two cases where service was either commuted or transformed into a quit-rent (Orloff and Neu Lichtenau), the peasants were specifically exempted from hay harvesting. The cost of commutation was high. The villagers of Neukirche were prepared to pay a rent of 7½ Marks per Hufe every year to be quit 'of all services which one commonly calls labour service, diking, dam work and from all service on expeditions'.<sup>84</sup>

The Handfesten also contain a number of special privileges for the peasants. The most common were fishing rights. Twelve Handfesten granted the inhabitants fishing privileges subject to the regulations concerning the type of tackle to be used and where it might be used, e.g. 'only on their bank of the Nogat'.<sup>85</sup> The villagers in Damerau were permitted to have small skiffs (kleine kanen), to go to the mills and to market; however they were not to use the craft to ferry passengers from one side of the river to the other.<sup>86</sup> The villagers in Orloff were permitted to trap birds in various waterways, with the exception of 'crymmende vogil' (birds of prey?).<sup>87</sup> The peasants of Neuteichdorf and Kleine Lichtenau could cut timber by the Vistula, in the former case they were permitted to cut only alderwood and they were forbidden to sell it.<sup>88</sup> Finally, in November 1351, the Order

confirmed an agreement between the villagers of Tiege, Orloff and Reimerswald. The villagers of Tiege had paid their neighbours for the privilege of using a road (21.60m wide), which passed between Orloff and Reimerswald to a wood. Should any sledged, carts or horses be found off the road, then the offended parties could levy a fine of one shilling. Those whose lands the road traversed could use the road but they had to maintain the hedges and ditches beside it.<sup>89</sup> Privileges concerning dams and drainage will be considered below.

The Handfesten provide no information concerning the number of Hufen which the peasant received as his Hof. The Flemish Hufe - prevalent in Upper Saxony, Silesia, Brandenburg, south Mecklenburg, Pomerania and above all Prussia - was an areal measure equivalent to 16.8ha. or c. 42 acres. Recently W. Kuhn has argued convincingly for two Hufen as the normal landed holding of the peasant on the NE German plain, although in West and East Prussia he sees this as a minimum figure which was often surpassed.<sup>90</sup> The first hard statistical evidence for the size of peasant holdings in the Werder villages is the 'Revisio Bonorum Oeconomiae Mariaeburgensis' drawn up in 1510 on the orders of King Sigismund of Poland.<sup>91</sup> In the following table, drawn up by Kuhn, the sizes of peasant holdings are accompanied by the number of peasants holding such quantities of land and by this expressed as a percentage.

$\frac{1}{4}$	2	0.2%
$\frac{1}{2}$	10	1.2%
1	116	13.9%
$1\frac{1}{4}$	3	0.4%
$1\frac{1}{2}$	33	4.0%
2	323	38.7%
$2\frac{1}{4}$	5	0.6%
$2\frac{1}{2}$	32	3.8%
3	180	21.5%
$3\frac{1}{2}$	23	2.7%
4	82	9.8%
$4\frac{1}{2}$	6	0.7%
5	5	0.6%
$5\frac{1}{2}$	1	0.1%
6	4	0.5%
$6\frac{1}{2}$	1	0.1%
7	4	0.5%
8	3	0.4%
10	2	0.2%
11	1	0.1%

---

Total peasant holdings

836

Total Hufen 2,031 $\frac{1}{2}$

Average holding 2.43 Hufen

While the most often encountered peasant farm size was two Hufen (38.7%), and although some 58.25% of

holdings were two Hufen or under, it should be noted that 42% of peasant farms consisted of more than two Hufen.

However, in a sense these general statistics are misleading.

By looking at the structure of holdings in the villages individually one can see that the Werder villages were not communities of equals. In the following table ten villages have been chosen to demonstrate this point.

The number of Hufen appears on the left side, the number of peasants with that number of holdings appears on the right.

Eychwald	Broske	Wernersdorf	Fürstenwerder
1      4	$\frac{1}{2}$ 1	2          6	1          3
2      13		$2\frac{1}{2}$ 1	2          7
4      2	1          1		$2\frac{1}{2}$ 2
	$1\frac{1}{2}$ 1	3          1	
		$3\frac{1}{2}$ 1	3          3
	2          4		4          6
	$2\frac{1}{2}$ 3	4          4	6 <u>Schulzen</u>
		6 <u>Schulz</u>	
	3          4		
	$3\frac{1}{2}$ 1		
	4 <u>Schulz</u>		



Bärwalde		Schonsee		Gnojau		Kl. Lichtenau	
1½	1	1	3	2	2	1	1
		2	10	2½	3	2	14
3	2	3	5			3	4
3½	4	4	3	3	2	4	6
		6	<u>Schulzen</u>	4	4		
4	4						
5	<u>Schulzen</u>						

Petirshagen		Gr. Lichtenau	
2	3	1	2
3	2	1½	3
4	4		
7	<u>Schulz</u>	2	4
		2½	2
		3	8
		3½	3
		4	2
		4½	1

Source: W. Hejnosz, Zródła do dziejów ekonomii Malborskiej  
(Łódź 1958), vol. 1.

Kuhn has demonstrated that between 1510 and 1590 the number of peasant holdings sank while their size increased. For example on the Grosse Werder in 1510 there were 586 holdings with an average size of 2.30 Hufen; in 1590, 418 holdings with an average size of 3.39 Hufen.<sup>92</sup>

A class of big peasant farmers had emerged, with the gap between the labour resources of their own families and the extent of their lands being closed by the labour of undertenants called cottagers.

The peasants held their lands according to Culmic law, named after the Kulmer Handfeste issued on 28 December 1233.<sup>93</sup> Essentially, Culmic law represented the sanctioning, by the Order, of aspects of the customary laws imported from older areas of settlement by incoming German colonists. For example, article ten sanctioned the use of Flemish inheritance customs, article twenty-three the use of the Flemish Hufe as the standard unit of land measurement in the Order state, and article eleven gave currency in Prussia to laws governing the discovery of noble metals, a law originating in Silesia and Freiburg.<sup>94</sup> So far as tenure was concerned, article ten of the Kulmer Handfeste defined Flemish inheritance law as inheritance through both sexes.<sup>95</sup> Since the value of tenure by Culmic law only becomes clear when the Order sought to re-write the terms of tenure, a full discussion of it will occupy part of chapter three.

Apart from the fact that the Handfesten often granted the peasants the right to settle cottagers on their Hufen,<sup>96</sup> there is evidence to suggest that on the eve of the battle of Tannenberg, the typical Order village on the Werder consisted of a charmed circle, invariably including the Schulz, of rich peasants, followed by a solid group of middling men and, trailing behind in terms

of Marks dispensed by the Tressler, the undertenants. In order to secure fodder for its herds of horses, the Order entered into both compulsory and voluntary contracts with individual peasants to supply fixed quotas of oats in return for money payment. The compulsory purchase was known as Gesetzter Hafer, assessed at the rate of six bushels from each Hufe for which the peasants received two shillings per bushel. The voluntary purchase was known as Haferkauf and the names of the individual peasants contracting to supply the oats were entered in the Marienburger Konventsbuch.<sup>97</sup> In the following tables, the quantities of grain supplied by individual peasants in the villages of Barwalde (1405) and Petirshagen (1406-07) have been given in the form of bar-charts. These two villages were selected for illustration because the Order happened to buy grain from several people in the villages in those years. In that respect they are untypical because usually a far smaller village elite was involved in the transactions.<sup>98</sup> However, they are of interest insofar as they tell us something about the number of adult males in a Werder village.

The sale of oats put considerable sums of money into the peasant economy. In the following table, the quantities of grain sold in the two villages are given along with their cash equivalents.

Bushels of Oats

230  
220  
200  
190  
180  
170  
160  
150  
140  
130  
120  
100  
90  
80  
70  
60  
50  
40  
30  
20  
0



637 BUSHELS  
TOGETHER  
DIVISION UNKNOWN

SYFRID TYFFENBU DER SCHOLZE  
GIRKE HORN  
CLAUWIS AM ENDE

PEASANT SUPPLYING OATS IN PETRASHEGEN 1467

DUNHURST

500  
400  
300  
200  
100

MICHEL SCHULZE  
TYDEMAN ALBRECHTS

HANNUS GERDE  
JOBEB TIEFFHAWER

GIRKE HORN  
HANNUS HOLCITE

HANNUS VUNCKE  
HEYNKE HANNUS

HARTING SNELLE  
CLAUWIS LESZEWICZ

HERMAN TIDE  
THEWUS VANTRAFER

DER PFARER  
HYNCKE LENCZE

JOCOB VOLKRECHT  
NICKIL LORENICZ

PAFFRANKE Y LIEBER HANNUS

PEASANT SUPPLYING OATS IN PETIRSHAGEN 1406

PERSOONLIJKHEIDEN IN OPHOUDING 1965

		ANDRIS STRUBE
		HANNUS HARTWIG
	JORGE STANGE	
	NICLUS STERBLOEN	
	HEYNRICH ROEKE	
	LORENCE BONEKOW	
		NICLUS MARQUART + ARNOLD SCHROETER
		NICLUS PRUSLE + NICLUS GRESSELOW
	CLAUWIS BONEKOW	
	ANDRIS GROTE	
		SELHOR
	GIRKE LUDEKEBAR	
		RULOFF + NICLUS ROBERT
		NICLUS HOPPENER
		ALDE ROBERT
	JACOB HUSEBUND	
	LORENCE HUSEBUND	
	JACOB ROBERT	
		CLAUWIS FISCHER
		PETER SCHOLLE
		NICLUS BEDERWERVECHT
	HEYNRICH CORT	
	NICLUS HEYE	
	NICLUS BLOMAN	
	NICLUS MELTZER	
	ANDRIS BUSEKISTE	
		JACOB SCHNEEBEKE der Schollee
		NICLUS SAGER
	COURADT BOLTENHAGEN	
	WILLIAM RODER	
	NICLUS STOBELOW	
	NICLUS WILLAM	
		WILKE KULRODT
	HEYNE SCHMACHER	
		HANKE SMYDT
	STULZE JOLOS	
		HANKE PLAT
		HANKE BUSEKISTE
		PETER REDER

	Bärwalde		Petirshagen	
1400	500/	12½m	1000/	25m
1401	900/	24m 3f.	1000/	27½m
1402	800/	22m	600/	16½m
1403	818/	22½m	2200/	60½m
1404	4000/	100m	2000/	50m
1405	9000/	225m		
1406			3000/	75m
1407			1500/	37½m
1408			1700/	42½m
1409-12	16018/	406m 3f.	13000/	334½m

---

In addition to the oats sold by voluntary or compulsory contract to the Order, the Werder peasants took advantage of their proximity to both Marienburg and to Danzig, the gateway to western European markets. In 1411, the cellar-master purchased 3283 bushels of barley for 294m 9 scot 6d. from 'the peasants who brought it to market'.<sup>99</sup> In an undated letter, Grand Master von Rusdorf mentioned to the Vogt in Leipe that he had allowed the Werder peasants to take their barley to market in Danzig 'so that they may deliver us our rents all the better'.<sup>100</sup> However, he noted that the rents were coming in with less frequency than before and that 'they now bring less corn and barley here to Marienburg'. He instructed the Vogt to forbid 'by loss of life and goods' the peasants to bring barley or anything else to Danzig. Instead they

were to sell the grain to the Order's demesne officials.

While arable farming probably played the largest part in the economy of the Werder peasantry, it would be misleading to cast their activities in too rigid or specialised a form. The great majority of peasants probably eked out a living by whatever means were at their disposal. These included fishing, fowling, ferrying,<sup>101</sup> bee-keeping,<sup>102</sup> and the cultivation of special crops, e.g. hops.<sup>103</sup> In 1412, thirty-eight peasants from various Werder villages sold 46 horses of varying breeds and condition to the Order for a total of about 220 Marks.<sup>104</sup>

The number of waterways which ringed the Werder and the suddenness with which extreme winter cold was succeeded by thawing ice ensured that the inhabitants of the Werder were ever vigilant to the dangers of flooding.

In such low-lying lands, often below sea-level, water and ice levels formed a frequent subject of correspondence between the Order officers. For example, on 9 April 1435 the Tressler wrote to the Grand Master informing him that it was still impossible to reach Elbing by certain routes, because the water level had not fallen.<sup>105</sup> On 21 February 1439 the commander of Elbing informed the Grand Master that the Vistula had burst its banks by Montau and that one of the Order's demesnes and the surrounding villages had been enveloped by water. The demesne would be out of action for the rest of the year.<sup>106</sup> Flooding, or the fear of it, could



start what amounted to mass panic. The commander of Schwetz wrote to the Grand Master on 11 July 1445 informing him that the floor waters had caused 'great damage' to the dam outside the town and that 'the people are terrified and have almost all left the town'.<sup>107</sup> More insidiously, the thawing ice put impossible strain on wooden structures such as bridges and sluice gates. A charter of 29 November 1343 granting the Werder peasants free use of a bridge over the Nogat mentions the possibility of the ice doing damage to the bridge.<sup>108</sup> In 1437 the commander in Memel reported that the waters had risen alarmingly and that the ice 'has already done great damage to the sluices'.<sup>109</sup> He was short of men and his skilled worker Urban had recently died. The commander asked the Grand Master to fix up a replacement at Marienburg since, although he had tried in vain to find such a man in Königsberg, it was impossible to come by such people 'up here'. Similarly, the commanders of Thorn found themselves in a running battle with the ice. On 4 April 1447, the commander wrote to the Grand Master pointing out that the thawing ice had carried away the kitchen and a sizeable chunk of earth from under the house. He estimated that the wall behind the house in Alt-Thorn had under a year to go before it collapsed too.<sup>110</sup> On 26 May 1449 the commander was complaining that the bridge was very dilapidated and that the dam and the sluices needed repair in the near future.<sup>111</sup>

In order to drain their marshy lands and to protect themselves from sudden inundation, the medieval

inhabitants of the Werder raised both a network of dikes and dams and a hierarchy of officers to maintain and watch over them. Some of the Handfesten contain stipulations concerning hydraulics problems. The village of Orloff was granted the right to drain water 'which damages their lands' into the Tiege and Linau rivers.<sup>112</sup> The inhabitants of Neuteichdorf were allowed to take earth from outside their ditches to maintain their dams. They were not to remove earth from beside the Schwente.<sup>113</sup> The villagers of Damerau were permitted to erect dams 'within their boundaries' to protect the village from flooding.<sup>114</sup> Occasionally, the Handfesten state that each holder of Hufen was to be responsible for so many lengths of dam. The peasants of Klein Lichtenau (71 Hufen) were responsible for a corresponding number of rope lengths of dam (eyn seyl des tampnes).<sup>115</sup> Once their rent-free years had elapsed, the villagers of Marienau were to be responsible for half a rope length of dam assessed according to the number of Hufen they occupied.<sup>116</sup> That a general obligation lay on the inhabitants of the Werder villages can be seen from the Handfeste granting Czesko von Karwese eight Hufen near Barendt. He and his heirs were released from 'peasant work commonly called labour service' but not from diking and dam work 'which we will that they shall be bound to do like other inhabitants of the Werder'.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, on 29 November 1343, the Order granted the inhabitants of the Werder villages free use of the bridge over the Nogat to the Marienburg in return for their help in the

maintenance of a large dam and a grain rent levied on the Hufen and, in the case of the Schulzen, on their ploughs.<sup>118</sup>

The functioning and maintenance of the dams, sluices and ditches required the subordination of individual interests to those of the community. In 1387, Grand Master Konrad Zölner von Rotenstein settled a dispute between the priests of the Werder and the 'Teichgeschworenen' which had arisen from the priests' reluctance to take part in the dam work. Each priest was to pay three Marks from each of his Hufen in return for exemption from communal dam construction, but they were still to be responsible for their ditches 'according to the number of Hufen the same as their neighbours'. The money - which the Order paid and which the priests were to pay back over six years at a rate of half a Mark from each Hufe each year - was to be given to the Teichgeschworenen who, with the advice of the Vogt of Leske were to pay rents - one Mark rent costing twelve Marks - which were to be used in place of the physical exertions of the priests.<sup>119</sup> Difficulties concerning dam obligations were not confined to priests. On 5 June 1430 the commander of Danzig wrote to the Grand Master concerning the trouble that had arisen between the bishop of Lesslau and some of the villagers of the Order. The commander remarked sarcastically that the Order peasants had more cause for complaint than the bishop, for the latter had increased the height of a weir and 100 morgen of land in three or four villages had been flooded in consequence.<sup>120</sup> The

commander wrote that 'some of your villages are much weakened and I am concerned that if matters do not change, some villages will become waste'. The commander had been out to inspect the weir a year earlier, accompanied by two subordinates, two of the bishop's henchmen and two 'Teichgeschworenen' from the Kleine Werder.

Sometimes lesser men were obstreperous. For example, on 14 May 1431 the commander of Brandenburg wrote to the Grand Master concerning dam repairs at Einsiedel near Königsberg.<sup>121</sup> He had had the dam measured and had decided to make each occupant of Hufen responsible for two feet of dam. The peasants of Pocarben had other ideas about this and intended to be quit of the task by appealing to the Grand Master armed with their Handfesten. On 26 June 1445 the Vogt in Grebin wrote to the Grand Master concerning a dispute between a man called Hatteniclus and the Abbot of Oliva.<sup>122</sup> The former had refused to allow 'his' earth to be used to construct a dam. The Abbot's woods were being ruined by flooding - saplings would not grow - but he was afraid to burden his peasants with more ditch-work. The Vogt recommended buying Hatteniclus out.

Late in April 1447 the Vogt in Grebin wrote to the Grand Master concerning a dispute between the villagers of Gemlitz (die Gymerlitzzer), and their neighbours in Langfelde on the Danziger Werder.<sup>123</sup> The former had dug three ditches to drain water off their fields causing damage to their neighbours. The 'tichgreven' and the 'gesworn' had told the culprits in the presence of the Vogt to leave the ditches as they were on pain of three

Marks. Despite their assurances to the contrary, the Gemlitz men had recently recommended clearing and extending the ditches, ruining the seed which their neighbours had sown. The Vogt requested instructions since the culprits were 'impudently' threatening 'to shoot' their neighbours in Langfelde. Finally, on 17 April 1447 the Vogt in Leipe drew the Grand Master's attention to a complex dispute which had arisen between the citizens of Elbing on the one hand and the Werder villages on the other concerning four villages which pertained to Elbing which had been flooded and progressively ruined by drainage arrangements made on the Werder.<sup>124</sup>

The Elbing councillors had a copy made of the Handfeste issued on 26 June 1378 by Winrich von Kniprode in their efforts to prove to the unsympathetic <sup>t</sup>Tichgrafen that the four villages enjoyed the same dam rights and customs (Thamrechte), as the other Werder villages.

Not much is known about the construction of the dams. According to F. Mager, early dams had a narrow profile, high in relation to their base width, and they therefore had to be strengthened with poles and faggots.<sup>125</sup> In the charter of 29 November 1343 concerning the Nogat bridge mentioned above, the peasants were permitted to cut and take brushwood, alder and elm wood from the Order's woods for use in strengthening the dams.<sup>126</sup> In February 1472, the 'gesworne' from the Grosse Werder complained that they could not maintain their dams. Among the reasons which they gave were the number of waste hufen

and that the 'herrn' in Elbing had refused them pile-wood (pfoelholtz). The Elbing citizens rejected the charge, claiming that they had given adequate quantities of timber, but that the recipients had used it 'to their own profit' rather than on the dams.<sup>127</sup>

The supervision of these drainage installations was in the hands of an official called the Teichgraf and representatives of the community called Teichgeschworenen. The origins of these institutions are unknown, but it is worth noting that the representative of the count of Holland on medieval Dutch drainage committees was called the dijkgraaf and the representatives of the community 'dijkschepenen'.<sup>128</sup> The Teichgrafen are occasionally to be encountered in the Order's financial records and in a few cases they were said to be from certain villages: Albertus der tichgreve from Leszewicz, Gregor tichgreffe in Bysterfeld; Volprecht dem tichgrefen zu Wernersdorff. They appear as trusted and well-to-do figures. On 28 October 1400 Volprecht received 101½m as wages for building work which some of the Werder peasants had undertaken in Samland.<sup>129</sup> On 30 April 1402 five men from Gross Lichtenau contracted to work on the mill-dam at Ragnit for wages of 1m 10 scot for every 'kolrute' (a measure of length in earth working) completed.<sup>130</sup> Volprecht the Teichgraf witnessed the agreement. Between 31 March and 23 April 1403 the Tressler paid 110m to Volprecht for dam work completed at Ragnit. A further 117m and 19 scot were paid out by other officials. The dam was 402½

'kolruten' long and cost 534  $\frac{1}{2}$ m and 7 scot to construct. The Werder villagers clearly had special skills that they knew how to market. Occasionally, the Teichgrafen appear as recipients of Order money for work done nearer home. On 28 October 1400 Volprecht received 28m 3f on behalf of the peasants who had carried hay. In April 1407 he received 10m for ditch work at Montau.<sup>131</sup>

Their word also carried weight in legal disputes. For example, in June 1453 the commander of Graudenz was accused before the Emperor by a miller's son from Alde Wysel of taking 100m from the father. The commander recalled that seventeen years previously the father had assaulted a maid and was at the commander's mercy. He also remembered that the Teichgraf and the Teichgeschworenen had intervened on the miller's behalf. The miller had been fined 30m as a result of their solicitations.<sup>132</sup>

## 2. Prussian Peasant Society

Despite the fact that German historians have been declaring for some time that the German Order's policy towards the native Prussians was very complex, the legend that the Order waged a war of extermination persists amongst those not professionally concerned with the Middle Ages.<sup>133</sup> Rooted in Polish as much as German nationalistic feelings,<sup>134</sup> this demonization of the German Order survives less in serious historical scholarship than in the melodramatic historical epics that are periodically shown on East European television.

Notwithstanding the mutual acts of brutality which occurred in the era of conquest, the Order followed a differentiated policy towards the native Prussians, Poles, Pomeranians, Kurs and Lithuanians according to their 'nationality' and social status. As Wenskus has shown in the case of Samlanders living in Ermland, the Order exploited pre-existing conflicts between the Prussian noblemen by confirming in their properties those who remained loyal to the Order during the periodic rebellions; granting them Culmic law, or by rewarding the loyal with offices such as that of Kammerer, interpreter or servant of a superior kind in one of the houses of the Order.<sup>135</sup> Pre-existing social divisions were preserved, although whether a man remained noble was determined by his readiness to accept Christianity or his loyalty to the Order. Converted Prussians could become knights - they could also join the Order - and the sons of pre-eminent Prussians were sent to school in Magdeburg to be brought up as Christians.<sup>136</sup> One can gauge the efficacy of this policy by the fact that in 1295 rebellious Prussian peasants decided to kill their 'own' noblemen as a prelude to a fight with the Order.<sup>137</sup> These factors - with freedom to marry whomsoever they wished enshrined in the Treaty of Christburg of 1249<sup>138</sup> - helped to ensure that the upper reaches of Prussian society inter-married with German immigrant families to form an undifferentiated 'Prussian' upper class.

The legal position of the Prussian peasantry



is difficult to determine since, being a conquered and subject people, the Order felt under no obligation to issue them with written statements of their rights and obligations.<sup>139</sup> The Hakenzinsbauern Prussian who farmed with a 'hook' plough rather than with the heavier - more ferruginous - German implement,<sup>140</sup> received no Handfesten. Such documents as were concerned with groups of Prussians, such as the Treaty of Christburg of 1249, concerned the free classes amongst the Prussians. This Treaty reflected the concern of the Papacy to equate freedom with conversion to Christianity. The reverse side of the coin was that rebellion and apostasy would result in a loss of freedom.<sup>141</sup> The Treaty granted them the right to acquire property from whomsoever they wished; to leave property to either son, daughter, parents, brother or nephew; the right to make testamentary bequests and to receive Holy Orders.<sup>142</sup> In return, they had to accept a number of religious and moral stipulations designed to initiate the new Christian order of things.

The Christian cemetery was to replace both the burning of the dead and interment with weaponry, horses and other valuables. The Prussians were to cease sacrificing to their own gods and they were to dispense with the services of their own priests. Polygamy and the practice whereby fathers and sons purchased a common wife whom the son could then 'inherit' from the father were forbidden and provision was made both for the building of churches and the maintenance of a Christian priesthood. The construction and decoration of churches

should replace the obscure happenings in the woods that apparently characterised Prussian paganism. Finally, the Treaty introduced the Prussians to the Christian obligations to abstain from fleshmeat on Fridays and servile work on Sundays.<sup>143</sup>

Of course it was as impossible to destroy paganism by this means - by associating Christianity with liberty - as it was to extirpate it by force. The only early fifteenth-century critic to turn his attention to the results of two hundred years of Christian lordship upon the Prussians was not impressed by the fruits of the efforts of the Order. In an admonitory tract written in the late 1420s, an anonymous Pomerelian Carthusian noted that heathenism was still rampant, Christian feast days were ignored and that those who managed to get to places of worship were liable to be seduced by the fare on offer from stallholders and innkeepers.<sup>144</sup> The Order was largely to blame for the appalling ignorance of the Christian religion amongst the Prussians since instead of encouraging them to go to Church, the Order had them out performing uncustomary labour services.<sup>145</sup> In general, the picture he drew of the Prussians was one of an oppressed and despised people whose only solace lay in riotous village fairs, intemperance and gambling.

The Order's answer to these problems was the issuance of periodic and conventional condemnatory ordinances. Successive ordinances enjoined landlords

and employers to keep an eye on the religious habits of their Prussian tenants and servants. This meant inter alia establishing whether they knew the Lord's Prayer.<sup>146</sup> Again, the ordinances occasionally contained threatening stipulations about 'magicians' and 'witches' (zcoberer adder zcoberynne),<sup>147</sup> whom, one presumes, were the pathetic remnants of a once proud pagan priesthood rather than common-or-garden charlatans. Despite these periodic declarations of intent, peasant paganism continued as it had done before, surviving in some ways long after the German Order had ceased to be a power in the land. The fact that the ordinance of 1444 urged officers of the Order to ensure the attendance at sermons of German as well as Prussian peasants may mean that the quasi pagan natives, immersed in rural superstition, saw little reason to attend church themselves.<sup>148</sup>

It is evident from any comparative study of the situation of the Prussian and German villagers that the former were legally, socially and economically disadvantaged. Although the Prussians lived in communes, with a Starost instead of a Schulz<sup>149</sup> as both the Order's functionary and the representative of the village, the Prussian villagers lacked the fixed and written collective privileges of their German or Germanized neighbours. The Prussians were the Order's justiciables. Their tenurial position was also far less secure than that of the German colonists. If a Prussian died without adult male issue, his land and half of his moveable property reverted to the lordship.<sup>150</sup> The Prussians also bore the brunt of

the Order's demands for both labour service on its demesnes and for heavy construction work carried out under the supervision of skilled German peasants on the expanding eastern frontier. Sometimes this resulted in conflicts of interest between the Grand Master, his subordinates and the Prussians. For example, in a letter dated May 1429, the commander of Christburg responded to the Grand Master's request for thirty men armed with axes and spades and accompanied by eight wagons with thirty-two horses for building work in Memel. The commander pointed out that the Prussians lacked the sort of horses necessary to drag loads of timber (das die Pruwszen in disse gebitte sulcher pferd nicht enhaben, die czu sulchen bawden holcz czu furen tuchtig weren).

He also said that the work would further impoverish the Prussians because it would make it impossible for them to bring in either their own or the demesne harvest. He foresaw the possibility of labour sabotage, with hindrances occurring to make it impossible for all of the men required to arrive together on time.<sup>151</sup> We shall meet this phenomenon again in the Order's dealings with the Prussian peasants. These labour services dislocated the Prussian farmer's own economy. Moreover, since the Prussians farmed with the 'hook' plough - which lacked the mouldboard of the heavier German plough<sup>152</sup> - they were effectively expending the same amount of energy in a day as their German neighbours while covering half the area. Their commitments were, however, roughly the same, once one has discounted the difference in the size of the

units upon which dues were assessed.<sup>153</sup> This together with the other disabling circumstances mentioned above meant that the Prussian peasants were considerably at a disadvantage in comparison with their German neighbours.

NOTES

1. E.J. Dormann, Geschichte des Kreises Marienburg nach Quellen und Urkunden (Danzig, 1862), p. 2.
2. O. Schlüter, Wald, Sumpf und Siedlungsland in Altpreussen vor der Ordenszeit (Halle 1921), pp. 5-12.
3. Ibid., p. 12.
4. K. Kasiske, Die Siedlungstätigkeit des Deutschen Ordens im östlichen Preussen bis zum Jahre 1410 (Einzelschriften der Historischen Kommission für ost-und westpreussische Landesforschung 5, Königsberg 1934) p. 42. There is a vast literature on the settlement of Prussia. Amongst the studies that have been most useful one may mention, K. Kasiske, 'Mittelalterliche Raumordnung in Westpreussen' in Weichselland, 39 (1940), pp. 54-59; H. Mortensen 'Landesplanung im ordenzeitlichen und herzoglichen Ostpreussen' in Neues Archiv für Landes- und Volkskunde von Niedersachsen, 7/8 (1948), pp. 439-459; P.G. Thielen, 'Raumordnung im Aufbau des mittelalterlichen Staates' in Forschungs- und Sitzungsberichte der Akademie für Raumforschung und Landesplanung vol. 15 Historische Raumforschung 3 (Bremen 1961), pp. 41-50, I should like to thank Prof. Thielen for sending me a copy of his article at very short notice; O. Zippel, 'Die Kolonisation des Ordenslandes Preussen bis zum Jahre 1309', in Altpreussische Monatsschrift 58 (1921), pp. 176-213 and 239-279; C. Krollmann, 'Die Besiedlung Ostpreussens durch den Deutschen Orden' in Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte 21 (1928), pp. 280-298; C. Krollmann, 'Zur Besiedlungsgeschichte und Nationalitätenmischung in den Komtureien Christburg, Osterode und Elbing' in Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins 64 (1923), pp. 3-41; C. Krollman, 'Die Herkunft der Deutschen Ansiedler in Preussen' in Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins 54 (1912), pp. 1-103; M. Rousselle, 'Die Besiedlung des Kreises Preussisch-Eylau in der Ordenszeit' in Altpreussische Forschungen 3,2 (1926), pp. 5-44 and 'Das Siedlungswerk des Deutschen Ordens im Lande Gerdauen' in Altpreussische Forschungen 6 (1929) pp. 220-255; F.L. Carsten, The Origins of Prussia (1954), pp. 52f; W. Ziesemer, 'Siedlungsgeschichte Ost- und Westpreussens' Hansische Geschichtsblätter (1927-28), 52, pp. 153-171. On settler numbers see W. Kuhn, 'Die Siedlerzahlen der deutschen Ostsiedlung' in Studium sociale (Köln/Opladen 1963), pp. 131-154. I should like to thank Dr. Heide Wunder for sending me a copy of this article.

5. Kasiske, Siedlungstätigkeit, p. 42, n.146 and PUB 2, No. 317, p. 234.
6. Kasiske, op.cit., p. 41f, and pp. 56-59.
7. PUB 5, i no. 65.
8. PUB 5, i no. 64.
9. PUB 2 no. 407.
10. PUB 4 no. 462
11. PUB 3, ii no. 687.
12. R. Wenskus, 'Über die Bedeutung des Christburger Vertrages für die Rechts-und Verfassungsgeschichte des Preussenlandes' in Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes, Festschrift für Erich Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg), p. 107.
13. PUB 2 nos. 151, 214, 359; 4 no. 540.
14. PUB 4 no. 540.
15. PUB 2 no. 407; 3, i no. 412.
16. PUB 2 no. 794.
17. PUB 5, i no. 31; 2 nos. 214, 320; 5, i no. 75.
18. PUB 2 no. 616.
19. M. Rousselle, 'Das Siedlungswerk des Deutschen Ordens im Lande Gerdauen' in Altpreussische Forschungen 6 (1929), p. 230.
20. H. Wunder, Siedlungs-und Bevölkerungsgeschichte der Komturei Christburg 13-16 Jahrhundert (Wiesbaden 1968) pp. 28-29.
21. Akten der Ständetage Preussens unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens, ed. M. Töppen (Leipzig 1880) 2, p. 622 c. 39. Cited as ASP henceforth.
22. GSA OBA Reg. I no. 9528.
23. PUB 2 no. 316.
24. PUB 3, i no. 412.
25. PUB 5, I no. 31. On fishing see G. Kisch Das Fischereirecht im Deutschordensgebiet Beiträge zu seiner Geschichte, Forschungen und Quellen zur Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte des Deutschordenslandes vol. 3 (Sigmaringen 1978) especially pp. 160f.

26. PUB 5, i no. 121.
27. H. and G. Mortensen, Die Besiedlung des nordöstlichen Ostpreussens bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts, Teil I Die preussisch-deutsche Siedlung am Westrand der Grossen Wildnis um 1400, in the series Deutschland und der Osten, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen Band 7 (Leipzig 1937), pp. 109-110. The letter is printed there as note 409.
28. PUB 5, ii No. 972.
29. PUB 3, i no. 357.
30. H. Patze; 'Die deutsche bäuerliche Gemeinde im Ordensstaat Preussen', Die Anfänge der Landgemeinde und ihr Wesen. Vol. 2 (Konstanz/Stuttgart 1964) Vorträge und Forschungen vol. 8, p. 159. On the German villages see also Hans Steffen 'Die Soziale Lage der Deutschen Dorfbewohner im Ordensstaate Preussen' (Deutsche Monatshefte, Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Gegenwart des Ostdeutschtums Heft 7/8 Jan/Feb. 1941), pp. 321-343, an excellent, if poorly annotated study that makes few concessions to the spirit of the times it was written in.
31. F. Benninghoven, 'Die Kriegsdienste der Komturei Danzig um das Jahr 1400', Acht Jahrhunderte Deutscher Orden in Einzeldarstellungen, ed. P. Klemens Wieser O.T. in the series Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, ed. P. Klemens Wieser vol. 1 (Bad Godesberg 1967), pp. 207-213.
32. Codex diplomaticus Prussicus, ed. J. Voigt vols. 1-6 (Königsberg i. Pr. 1836-61) 6, no. 14.
33. GSA OBA Reg I no. 9080.
34. R. Brenner, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe', Past and Present no. 70 (February 1976), p. 57.
35. H. Wunder, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development', Past and Present, no. 78 (1978), p. 49. See also H. Wunder, 'The Mentality of Rebellious Peasants - the Samland Peasant Rebellion of 1525', The German Peasant War of 1525 - New Viewpoints, ed. B. Scribner and G. Benecke (London 1979), pp. 144-159.
36. PUB 3, i no. 186. See also PUB 3, i nos. 170; 171; 3, ii no. 688 and 5, i no. 422.
37. PUB 2 no. 616; 4 no. 599.
38. PUB 4 no. 672.
39. PUB 4 no. 672.



40. PUB 2 nos. 151; 214; 360.
41. Steffen art., op.cit., p. 327; Patze art. op.cit. Wunder, Siedlungs - und Bevölkerungsgeschichte, p. 29.
42. Wunder, ed. Das Pfennigschuldbuch der Komturei Christburg Veröffentlichungen aus den Archiven Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Köln/Berlin 1969), 2, p. 242. See also GSA OBA Reg I, no. 13073, 16 September 1454 the Schulzen were ordered to help the Pferdemarshal of Leske appropriate the live-stock and goods belonging to Danzig citizens on the Werder. The presumption being that the Schulzen would know who owned what.
43. Das Marienburger Konventsbuch der Jahre 1399-1412, ed. W. Ziesemer (Danzig 1913) p. 121; See also GSA OBA Reg. I no. 2084, a list of grain purchases made on 17th June 1414 by the Vogt in Leske wherein the Schulzen appear in a similar role, e.g. 'Miraw dy Eliasche te. I<sup>c</sup> gerste, Fidet Nicclus schultz tzum Newentiche', 'Mergenow, Snadfus te. 50 scheffels gerste fid<sup>t</sup>. Albertus der Schultz ibid', 'Hannus Stobelaw te. 200 sch. gerste fidit Tydeman Albrecht von Dantzke und Nicclus Brofe der schultz von Orlaw'.
44. Ibid., p. 218.
45. Ibid., p. 219.
46. Das Pfennigschuldbuch der Komturei Christburg, ed. Wunder, p. 150.
47. ASP 1, no. 420, pp. 557-558.
48. ASP 1, no. 421, pp. 559-560. The Werder Schulzen and Ratleute also paid homage and swore oaths to the newly elected Grand Masters. On 1 April 1450 Ludwig von Erlichshausen arrived at Leske to receive the homage and oaths of the Schulzen, Ratleute and those other Werder notables, the Teichgeswornen. On 3 May he heard the oaths of those assembled at Grebin from the Stobelausche Werder. See SRP 4, p. 82. Von Erlichshausen's homage-taking perambulations are printed there as part of note 1 on pp. 81-82. See also GSA Of 17. p. 759f.
49. ASP 1, no. 406, pp. 543. See also ASP 1, no. 441, pp. 586-587.
50. GSA OBA Reg. I no. 9808.
51. ASP 1, no. 528.
52. Ibid., articles 1-5.
53. ASP 2, no. 383, pp. 621-622 (article 34). An abrupt

order to stop delivering provisions, including grain, to Danzig was sent to the villagers on the Grosse Werder on 16 April 1455. It was addressed to the Schulzen, Ratleuthen, Scheppen peasants and in general all Werder inhabitants. The penalty for infringement of the order was dispossession and the burning to the ground of the property. GSA OBA Reg. I no. 13,637. On 29 September 1454 Marshal Jon Szekotszky summoned the Schulzen from six villages to a meeting. If they failed to turn up, 'we will regard you as enemies rather than friends and you will not be secure in our properties'. See, GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 13120. The only example of a Schulz on the way to demotion that I know of can be found in a letter dated 9 June 1453 (GSA OBA Reg. I no. 12097). The commander in Graudenz wrote to the Grand Master following a complaint made by the Schulz in the village of Sackeraw concerning Albrecht one of the commander's servants. The Schulz claimed that Albrecht had ordered grain in the village but had not paid him for it. Albrecht and the commander denied this. The commander added that 'I will not tolerate him in the village on account of his impossible conduct and he has disgracefully cut down my heath and so long as he lives in the village, the people are leaving it'. The commander hoped that in future the Grand Master would consult him first rather than merely listening to the plaintiff's version of events.

54. Ibid., p. 622 (article 36).
55. ASP 2, no. 410 p. 669 (article 26).
56. On the Willküren see H. Patze art. op.cit., p. 184f.
57. GSA Ostpreussische Foliant 122 fol. 220-222.
58. Ibid., fol. 220 (articles 1,2,3).
59. Patze, art. op.cit., p. 162.
60. ASP 2, no. 190, p. 298.
61. ASP 2, no. 227 pp. 348-350. See also nos. 170; 190; 203; 202. See also the brief discussion of the revolt in W. Brüning, 'Die Stellung des Bistums Ermland zum deutschen Orden in dreizehnjährigen Städtekriege', Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1895) 32, pp. 12-13.
62. ASP 2, p. 350.
63. ASP 1, no. 364, pp. 474-475.
64. Ibid., no. 366, pp. 476-477.

65. ASP 1, no. 364, p. 475 (articles 23 and 24).
66. ASP 2, no. 227, p. 349, E. Wilke, 'Die Ursachen der preussischen Bauern - und Bürgerunruhen 1525 mit Studien zur ostpreussischen Agrargeschichte der Ordenszeit', Altpreussische Forschungen 7 (1930) p. 66.
67. ASP 2, no. 253, p. 379.
68. ASP 2, no. 259, p. 396.
69. ASP 2, no. 253, pp. 379-80.
70. ASP 2, no. 259, pp. 396-397.
71. ASP 2, no. 260, p. 397.
72. L. von Baczko, Geschichte Preussens, 6 vols. (Königsberg 1792-1800), 3, pp. 375-380.
73. PUB 2, no. 150. See also Max Toeppen, 'Die Zins-Verfassung Preussens unter der Herrschaft des deutschen Ordens' in Zeitschrift für Preussische Geschichte und Landeskunde, 4 (1867), pp. 207-232, 345-367, 611-627, 742-761.
74. PUB 2, nos. 214; 315; 319.
75. PUB 2, no. 151. See also Das Marienburger Konventsbuch der Jahre 1399-1412, ed. W. Ziesemer (Danzig 1913), p. 245 for further rents assessed in terms of drainage conditions.
76. PUB 2, nos. 151; 315; 794; 616; 3, ii no. 443; 2, nos. 319; 829; 318; 360.
77. K. Kasiske, Die Siedlungstätigkeit, p. 4 for the interpretation of rent-free years.
78. PUB 5, no. 419; 2 no. 219; 5, ii no. 972; 5, i no. 34; 2 no. 407; 2, no. 318.
79. Steffen, 'Die soziale Lage', p. 327. On the village priests see also H. Steffen, 'Die soziale Lage der Pfarrgeistlichkeit im Deutschordensstaat' in Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands 69 (1927), pp. 1-97.
80. PUB 2, no. 151.
81. PUB 2, nos. 317; 359; 407; 794; 829; 3, i no. 410; 3, ii nos. 688; 734; 4, nos. 436; 539; 680; 5, i nos. 31; 321; 418; 419; 422; 5, ii no. 972.
82. PUB 2, no. 317.

83. PUB 5, i no. 321.
84. PUB 4, no. 680.
85. PUB 2, no. 352.
86. PUB 5, i no. 32.
87. PUB 4, no. 402.
88. PUB 2, nos. 150 and 317.
89. PUB 4, no. 699.
90. K. Kuhn, 'Bauern hofgrößen in der mittelalterlichen Nordostsiedlung', in Hamburger mittel-und ostdeutsche Forschungen vol. 4 (Hamburg 1963), p. 265f. See also his 'Der Pflug als Betriebseinheit in Altpreußen' in Zeitschrift für Ostforschung 12 (1963), pp. 473-500. See Mortensen Die Besiedlung, p. 106f.
91. Zróżka do dziejów ekonomii Malborskiej, ed. W. Hejnosz (Łódź 1958), 1, pp. ix-75.
92. W. Kuhn, 'Bauernhofgrossen', p. 244f.
93. G. Kisch, Die Kulmer Handfeste, Text, rechtshistorische und textkritische Untersuchungen nebst Studien zur Kulmer Handfeste, Forschungen und Quellen zur Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte des Deutschordenslandes vol. 2 (Sigmaringen 1978), p. 4.
94. Ibid., p. 46.
95. H. Plehn, 'Zur Geschichte der Agrarverfassung von Ost-und Westpreußen', Forschungen zur Brandenburgisch - preussischen Geschichte 17, 18 (1904-05) 17, p. 56.
96. For example PUB 2, no. 359; 3, ii no. 734; 5, i no. 34 and no. 65.
97. Das Marienburger Konventsbuch der Jahre 1399-1412 ed. W. Ziesemer (Danzig 1913), p. 36f, 52f, 91f, 118f, 144f, 163f, 176f, 191f, 218f, 237f, 243f, for examples.
98. See Konventsbuch, p. 163f and p. 191f, for examples.
99. Ibid., p. 251.
100. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7878.
101. Konventsbuch, p. 191 and PUB 5, i no. 32.
102. PUB 3, ii, no. 621, p. 509.

103. Konventsbuch, p. 211, Peter Werre, hoppener (Schonsee). See also p. 209, der wintmolner (Petirshagen); der wintmolner (Schonbaum), p. 245.
104. Ibid., p. 288f. for name of seller, breed and condition of horse and price.
105. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 6969; see also SRP 3, pp. 356, p. 364 for further floods in 1415 and 1416. See also ASP 2, no. 432, pp. 692-693 for evidence of flooding in April 1446 - the Nogat had burst its banks by Wiedau. See GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12530 for rent and tithe concessions in November 1453 to the villagers of Smollen who had suffered when the Vistula burst its banks.
106. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7557.
107. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8814.
108. PUB 3, ii, no. 621, p. 508.
109. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7304.
110. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9321.
111. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9931.
112. PUB 4, no. 402.
113. PUB 2, no. 150.
114. PUB 5, i, no. 32.
115. PUB 2, no. 317.
116. PUB 2, no. 360.
117. PUB 3, i no. 240.
118. PUB 3, ii no. 621.
119. Codex diplomaticus Prussicus, ed. J. Voigt (Königsberg 1836-61), 4, no. 45.
120. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 5384.
121. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 5642.
122. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8791.
123. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9340.
124. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9332 (three letters); ASP 3, no. 7, p. 12.

125. F. Mager, Der Wald in Altpreußen als Wirtschaftsraum Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart 7 (Köln/Graz 1960), 1, p. 387f.
126. PUB 3, ii no. 621.
127. ASP Königlichen Anteils, ed. F. Thunert (Danzig 1896), 1, pp. 174-175.
128. J. de Vries, The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age 1500-1700 (New Haven and London 1974), p. 28f. On drainage in general see H. Bertram 'Die Eindeichung, Trockenlegung und Besiedlung des Weichseldeltas seit dem Jahre 1300 in ihrer geopolitischen Bedeutung' Zeitschrift des West-preussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1935), 72, pp. 187-202 and S.J. Fockema Andreae, 'Embanking and Drainage Authorities in the Netherlands during the Middle Ages', Speculum (1952), 27, pp. 158-167 for a brief discussion of the three main types of Waterschappen in the Netherlands.
129. Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch der Jahre 1399-1409, ed. E. Joachim (Königsberg 1896), p. 86.
130. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-239. In a letter dated 19 June 1416 the Marshal unfavourably compared the Prussian labourers he was employing at Memel with 'the useful German folk... from the Werder'. See GSA OBA Reg. I no. 2358.
131. Marienburger Tresslerbuch, ed. E. Joachim, p. 421.
132. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12084.
133. See for example, M. Howard, War in European History (Oxford 1976), especially p. 5 and p. 10. Surprisingly, P. Dollinger is of the view that 'The inhabitants (of Prussia) were for the most part killed or deported' by the Order. See his The German Hansa trans. by D.S. Ault and S.H. Steinberg (London 1970), p. 34.
134. For an interesting discussion of the way in which the Polish historiography of the Order was until quite recently more heavily influenced by nationalistic anti-German sentiments than by the requirements of historical materialism see W. Wippermann, Der Ordensstaat als Ideologie Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, vol. 24, Publikationen zur Geschichte der Deutsch-Polnischen Beziehungen vol. 2 (Berlin 1979), p. 348f.
135. R. Wenskus, 'Die gens Candein, Zur Rolle des prussischen Adels bei der Eroberung und Verwaltung Preussens', Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (1961), 10, pp. 90-96.

136. R. Wenskus, 'Der deutsche Orden und die nicht-deutsche Bevölkerung des Preussenlandes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siedlung', Die Deutsche Ostsiedlung des Mittelalters als Problem der Europäischen Geschichte, Reichenau Vorträge ed. W. Schlesinger (Sigmaringen 1975), 3, p. 420.
137. Ibid., p. 422; Maschke, Der Deutsche Orden und die Preussen', p. 60.
138. H. Patze, 'Der Frieden von Christburg vom Jahre 1249' reprinted in Heidenmission und Kreuzzugsge-  
danke in der Deutschen Ostpolitik des Mittelalters  
Wege der Forschung 7, ed. H. Beumann (Darmstadt 1973), p. 451.
139. H. Wunder, 'The Mentality of Rebellious Peasants - the Samland Peasant Rebellion of 1525', The German Peasant War of 1525 - New Viewpoints, ed. B. Scribner and G. Benecke (London 1979), p. 150.
140. F.L. Carsten, The Origins of Prussia (Oxford 1954), p. 38; W. Kuhn, 'Der Haken in Altpreußen', Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes Festschrift für E. Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg 1963), p. 168.
141. Wunder, Siedlungs - und Bevölkerungsgeschichte, pp. 80-81; Wenskus, 'Der deutsche Orden und die Nichtdeutschen', p. 419; Maschke, Der Deutschen Orden und die Preussen, p. 46; E. Christiansen, The Northern Crusades The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier 1100-1525 (London 1980), pp. 201-204 has a good discussion of both the Treaty and the position of the Prussian peasants.
142. Patze, 'Der Frieden von Christburg', p. 449; Maschke, Der Deutschen Orden und die Preussen, p. 41.
143. Patze, 'Der Frieden von Christburg', p. 459.
144. SRP 4, p. 462.
145. Ibid., pp. 460-461.
146. ASP 2, no. 383 18, p. 619.
147. Ibid., no. 244 1, p. 362; no. 383 1, 3, p. 617.
148. Ibid., no. 383 6, p. 61.
149. Wunder, Siedlungs - und Bevölkerungsgeschichte, p. 83.
150. Ibid., pp. 83-84.
151. ASP 1, no. 391, pp. 519-520.

152. W. Kuhn, 'Der Haken in Altpreußen', p. 169.
153. Wunder, Siedlungs - und Bevölkerungsgeschichte, pp. 87-88.



CHAPTER TWO

THE ANATOMY OF AN ARISTOCRATIC CORPORATION

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ANATOMY OF AN ARISTOCRATIC CORPORATION

#### 1. An Abode for the German Nobility: Origins and Admission of the Brethren

Unlike the other military Orders, the German Order largely consisted of men from one 'nationality'. Although it is possible to discover the odd Frenchman, Croat or Pole, these were individual exceptions.<sup>1</sup> The brethren were overwhelmingly recruited from the German-speaking territories, including what are now the Netherlands, Switzerland and Austria. This point may be demonstrated by a letter dated 7 September 1451 in which Mathys van der Straissen, provincial commander in Altenbiesen wrote to the Grand Master informing him that he had recently received two Brabantine noblemen into the Order whom he said were 'of the German tongue' (von duytsch tzongen).<sup>2</sup> Men from the ancient territories of the Empire or from the oldest of the imperial marches, for example Franconia, Thuringia, Swabia and Hesse were strongly represented in the Order branch in Prussia while north Germans were much in evidence in the Livonian branch. This is an important point since it meant that whereas the Livonian knights mostly came from the same parts of Germany as the noble families who settled in Livonia, the brethren in Prussia shared less regional affinity with the majority of settlers in Prussia who

mostly came from north Germany or the newly settled north-eastern territories.<sup>3</sup>

The 'Germanness' of the German Order needs to be underlined since there have been attempts to argue that the Order 'belongs to the most memorable creations of European collaboration in the middle ages',<sup>4</sup> or, was 'the representative of the concentrated energy of European civilisation'.<sup>5</sup> These fanciful anachronisms would be harmless enough if they were not allied with attempts to tack the attitudes and language of nineteenth century German nationalism, adapted to suit the Cold War, on to a medieval prefigurement of the European Community. Thus, Weise argued that the Bohemian Přemyslids and the Brandenburg Askanians saw the state created by the Order in Prussia as 'a bulwark against eastern threats', without troubling to explain what the threats were or from whom they came.<sup>6</sup> W. Kuhn in a paper entitled 'Military Orders as Guardians of the West against eastern Heathenism' presupposes a heathen 'threat' to the West from the East. Yet in virtually the same breath he speaks of the threat as emanating from two residual areas of Slavonic paganism, left like islands behind the advancing flood of German and Polish Christianity.<sup>7</sup> The threat is never made explicit; it is always a flood, sea or wave. The defensive terms used (bulwark, dam, dyke etc.), serve to conceal the essentially aggressive nature of the activities of the German Order through the device of an anachronistic connection between it and a supposedly threatened and passive European or, more

sinisterly, Western identity of interest.<sup>8</sup> In a letter dated 1450, expelling a foreigner from the Order, the Grand Master wrote to the provincial commander of Altenbiesen

the Order is a German Order in which up to now no non-Germans, but only Germans, healthy and trained people, who are in all respects born to the shield are customarily received,

The Order was a German creation for Germans. Its landed possessions dispersed over Christendom and the assistance rendered to it by high-ranking visitors from France or England<sup>10</sup> made it no less of a German operation than do the far flung holdings of a modern German industrial concern.

The postulant was normally received into the Order in one of the houses in the twelve bailiwicks in the Empire. Although a law of Dietrich von Altenburg reserved the right to receive postulants to the Grand Master and General Chapter,<sup>11</sup> in practice the task was carried out by the German Master or one of his subordinate provincial commanders.<sup>12</sup> The social and moral credentials of the postulant were scrupulously examined. Sometimes the recruit came armed with a letter of recommendation from a patron which detailed his ancestry and moral worth. In a letter dated 8 May 1432 Heinrich count of Schwarzburg wrote on behalf of a recruit called Hans von Hongede 'a pious, able fellow' who was also the scion of four armigerous families.<sup>13</sup> We learn from a model for the admission of brethren drawn up for the German Master Jost von Venningen dated 1447-1454 that the recruit had

to produce two noble relatives of over forty years of age who would vouch for his ancestry and fitness for the life ahead. The postulant also had to bring three horses worth 40 Gulden (or the money equivalent), armour and weaponry and 25m for the trip to Prussia.<sup>14</sup>

Despite Manfred Hellmann's pioneering essay on a social-historical approach to the membership of the German Order, there is still no overall study of the social origins of the brethren. Hellmann argued that while representatives of the higher nobility can easily be found in the ranks of the Order, many of the brothers were from the lower service nobility who entered the Order so as to free themselves from ties of dependence to secular and ecclesiastical lords while partaking of the status, power and security that went with membership of an exempt religious corporation governing a large territorial state.<sup>15</sup> More recently Erich Maschke has argued that in the fifteenth century the German Order progressively became a refuge for the lower nobility of Franconia and Swabia who, suffering from the unfavourable economic climate of the later Middle Ages were also trapped in a tightening vice formed by the territorial princes and the towns. Since both Prussia and the German bailiwicks of the Order were subject to the same agrarian crisis, the minor noblemen sought to stiffen the entrance qualifications so as to guarantee their share of the diminishing returns from the land. They also brought their hostility to townsmen and sharpened consciousness of their Estate with them to Prussia.<sup>16</sup>

Another discernible trend is the way in which the higher nobility were using the Order to reward their servants. The Order acquiesced in this process because it brought political support. For example in September 1451 the provincial commander of Altenbiesen informed the Grand Master that in accordance with the latter's instructions he had received two Brabantine noblemen who had been recommended to him by the duke of Burgundy and the bishop of Liège. The provincial commander asked the Grand Master to favour them since then he would 'get favour and thanks' from their mighty masters.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, in a letter dated 1 April 1453 the German Master asked the Grand Master to favour Ytel von Werdenaw since both the latter's father Friedrich and their lord count Ulrich von Württemberg had shown themselves to be well-disposed to the Order in the past.<sup>18</sup> Those who were not well-disposed went down on the German Master's black list of troublesome aristocratic families that he apparently kept from 1448 onwards.<sup>19</sup>

Aristocratic patronage did not cease once the postulant had managed to gain entry into the Order. In a letter dated 23 December 1453, Margrave Friedrich of Brandenburg drew the Grand Master's attention to the desire of brother Hans von Waldenfels who wished to be transferred from the commandery of Balga to Königsberg. The margrave conjured up the many services that Hans and his family had rendered him in the past and explained that he owed the family a favour.<sup>20</sup> It also clearly helped to have family connections with Order members.

For example in 1432 Dytherich von Wyttershausen 'retired officer in the German bailiwicks' wrote to his old friend Grand Master von Rusdorf on behalf of his two nephews whom he had recently received into the Order and who were en route to Prussia. He hoped that they would fulfil their promise and that the Grand Master would be gracious to them.<sup>21</sup>

As we have seen, the Order was concerned about the character of the postulant. Recruits with shady pasts not only sullied the image of the stern warrior of the Faith that the Order was concerned to project but could also unwittingly occasion outside interference in the business of the corporation. The Order did not like debt. The relatives of Heinrich von Oberndorf had to promise to pay off his debts in fixed instalments before he was allowed into the Order. In 1450 Hans Stosslinger who had lied about his insolvency at the reception ceremony, subsequently confessed and was allowed to leave the Order.<sup>22</sup> The problem was serious when the list of creditors happened to include the powerful. Thus in a letter dated 8 July 1428 Arnolt von Hirsperck commander of Ellingen and Pflieger of the bailiwick of Franconia wrote to von Rusdorf concerning a brother Hawszner whose creditors included a margrave. Von Hirsperck recognised that this would be damaging to the public profile of the Order and so he recommended that Hawszner be sent home if he lacked the wherewithal to pay his debts.<sup>23</sup>

In the mid fifteenth century there were attempts

tightly to enforce the social qualifications for membership of the Order. In part, as we shall see, this demand was made by the brethren themselves who blamed the deteriorating relations between the Order and the Prussian Estates upon parvenus who were siphoning off the wealth of the Order to their equally low born friends and relatives in the West.<sup>24</sup> Their demands were met by Grand Master Konrad von Erlichshausen who sought to inhibit social dilution by restricting the right to receive postulants to himself (or those commissioned by him), and the German Master. Thus in 1449 he wrote to the provincial commander of Altenbiesen

we have taken counsel with our officers and have found that it has been an undesirable past practice that people have been accepted as brothers of the Order too lightly and without examination of their characters. Therefore we earnestly desire that you shall not receive anybody into our Order before we ourselves have sent someone, according to old custom, to ask about the birth, character and way of life of those who shall join our Order. You shall admit to our Order those who are well born and skilful so that they may receive our Order's honour and piety<sup>25</sup>

Following von Erlichshausen's death in 1449 the senior officers drew up a series of guidelines that his successor was bound to follow. The last of these encapsulated the increasing social exclusiveness of the Order.

Item, the provincial commanders and commanders in the German lands shall only admit counts, barons, good knights and service noblemen since that is good old custom. They shall not admit peasants or townsmen for money's sake. If it should happen that peasants or other people who are not of good birth should be admitted



by the aforementioned provincial commanders etc. for money's sake or out of good will, and if one should come out to Prussia, then one shall send him back to Germany where he came from<sup>26</sup>

As far as those in the Order were concerned, the institution was there to cater for the German aristocracy in a time of crisis. This was also how the German aristocracy increasingly viewed the corporation. In 1449 when the provincial commander of Altenbiesen informed the local nobility that his houses could not take any more of their number, he was asked indignantly 'why does one need the Order anymore if it shouldn't be a hospital and abode for the nobility?'.<sup>27</sup> It had indeed become, in von Erlichshausen's words, 'our Order'.

2. Oligarchic rule: the Grand Master and the 'Grossgebietiger'.

The highest office in the German Order was that of Grand Master. The Grand Master was elected following the summoning of a General Chapter of the Order in which all of the far-flung branches were represented. Before his death, a Grand Master was obliged to appoint a deputy who issued the invitations to the election to the officers in the German bailiwicks, Prussia, Livonia, Austria, Apulia and Rumania.<sup>28</sup>

The General Chapter elected a foreman (commendator electionis), who in turn nominated a second member of the electoral college. These two then nominated a third until thirteen electors had been progressively

co-opted. There had to be eight knight-brothers, one priest-brother and four other brothers. They were not to be from the same province of the Order or of the same nationality.<sup>29</sup> A simple majority ensured election. In cases where one of the electors was put forward as a candidate, the man affected was asked to withdraw so that his suitability might be discussed. If he were still in the running then his place on the electoral board would be taken by another brother. For example, Konrad von Jungingen was the electoral foreman in 1393. He was excluded from the board and subsequently elected Grand Master.<sup>30</sup> Following the announcement of the result, the bells were rung and the priest-brothers sang the Te Deum. The deputy Master escorted the new Grand Master to the altar and invested him with a ring and circular seal depicting the Virgin Mary enthroned holding the Christ-child and a sceptre.<sup>31</sup>

Did the four men who occupied the highest office in the Order in its years of crisis share any common path to the top? In terms of geographical origin, they were a mixed bunch. Heinrich von Plauen came from the Voigtland, a territory east of Erfurt in the angle formed by the rivers Saale and Eger.<sup>32</sup> Michael K"uchmeister was most probably a Silesian,<sup>33</sup> Paul von Rusdorf came from an old Ministerialengeschlecht from the vicinity of Bonn in the Rhineland.<sup>34</sup> Konrad von Erlichshausen came from a family of Swabian service nobility but one whose star was on the ascent in the fifteenth century.<sup>35</sup> In 1400 his father received an imperial estate near Crailsheim

and relatives of the Grand Master can be found as senior members of the pronouncedly aristocratic cathedral chapter of Würzburg.<sup>36</sup>

Heinrich von Plauen was born about 1370. He came to Prussia as a crusader in 1391. In the next few years he entered the Order for in 1397 he was adjutant to the commander and in 1398 House-commander in Danzig. After four years in this post he became commander of Nessau, the southernmost and smallest posting of that rank in the Order. In July 1407 he was appointed commander of Schwetz, one of the largest south-western commanderies. Following the disaster at Tannenberg on 15 July 1410 - in which the highest officers with the exception of the Hospitaller were slain - von Plauen took command of Marienburg and the deputy Grand Mastership. In this capacity he issued invitations to the German and Livonian Masters to an election. On 9 November 1410 he was elected Grand Master.<sup>37</sup>

Like von Plauen, K<sup>ü</sup>chmeister reached the highest office in his early forties. Between 1396-1402 he was Pflieger in Rastenburg; House-commander in Rhein; Sch<sup>ä</sup>ffer in Elbing; adjutant to the commander of Balga and then once again Pflieger in Rastenburg.<sup>38</sup> In 1402 K<sup>ü</sup>chmeister, who had both experience in trade acquired in Elbing, knowledge of the eastern commanderies picked up in Rhein and Balga and a connection with Ulrich von Jungingen became Grosssch<sup>ä</sup>ffer. It was an important position, handling a capital of over 60,000m in 1405

and with an extensive staff.<sup>39</sup> Early in 1405 Kűchmeister became Vogt in Samaiten, a frontier territory that the Order acquired from Grand Duke Witold by the Treaty of Sallinwerder of 1398. This treaty was the product of the Order's desire to drive a wedge between Poland and Lithuania and Witold's desire to keep a hand free in his dealings with his Polish cousin. It also enshrined the aggressive designs of both parties upon Pleskau and Novgorod.<sup>40</sup> The job of the Vogt - until he was driven out by a rebellion in 1409 - was to integrate the territory with the Order administration before Witold decided that the treaty had served his short-term diplomatic aims.<sup>41</sup> In 1410, Kűchmeister received another taxing post, as Vogt of the New Mark. Put briefly, his job was to keep open the connection with the West and to ensure that the hostile and anarchic nobility of the territory did not get the chance to take advantage of the confusion that engulfed Prussia in 1410.<sup>42</sup> In October of that year he went on the offensive against the Poles in a series of operations designed to harass and demoralise the enemy. After a year in captivity in the castle of Checiny near Cracow, he became Marshal in April 1411. Since he had already acted as an emissary to King Sigismund in 1409,<sup>43</sup> he was employed in this capacity by von Plauen in 1411. Ordered by von Plauen to attack Poland in September 1413, Kűchmeister turned back his forces and, pre-empting a charge of treason that had to be answered on 14 October, deposed von Plauen before 9 October. Ironically, the General Chapter that

was supposed to hear charges against the Marshal was held to elect him to the highest office.

Paul von Rusdorf had a smoother path to the top than either of his predecessors. Like K"uchmeister he was Pfleger in Rastenburg (1412), then rose via the commandery of Tuchel to the office of Tressler. Between 1415 when he became Tressler and March 1422 when he became Grand Master, he occupied two other senior posts; Oberste Trapier (June 1416-August 1418), and Grosskomtur (September 1418-March 1422). On 10 March 1422 he was elected Grand Master following K"uchmeister's resignation on grounds of ill health.<sup>44</sup>

Following von Rusdorf's resignation on 2 January 1441, Konrad von Erlichshausen was elected Grand Master. His first appearance was as an under adjutant to K"uchmeister in 1415. After a spell as Vogt of Grebin on the Danzig Werder he was commander of Ragnit - the link with Livonia and the centre for intelligence gathering concerning Lithuania - from 1425 to 1432. In 1432 he became Grosskomtur and in 1434 Marshal, For reasons that are not clear his career then suffered a check. He was moved to the commandery of Althaus in the Culmerlad. In the wake of the internal rebellion that took place in 1440, von Erlichshausen was restored to the Marshalship until his election to the Grand Mastership on 12 April 1441.<sup>45</sup>

There does not seem to be any common denominator in their careers. Von Plauen reached the highest office because he was the man of the hour or, looked at more

cynically, because his competitors were dead. K"uchmeister had diplomatic and military skills and experience in a wide variety of offices. Von Rusdorf quickly entered the ranks of the Grossgebietiger, occupying three important positions. Von Erlichshausen had a steady ascent marred only by the suspicions and recriminations of von Rusdorf's last years. They all came to the office with several years of experience in a wide variety of posts (von Plauen 13 years; K"uchmeister 18; von Rusdorf 10 and von Erlichshausen 26). None of them had occupied a post lower than that of underadjutant or a household office below that of Housecommander. Yet set alongside their thirteenth and fourteenth century predecessors, one fact is glaringly obvious about them. Whereas the former included princes (Konrad von Thuringen 1239-40, Luther von Braunschweig 1331-35); higher nobility (Heinrich von Hohenlohe 1244-50, Dietrich von Altenburg 1335-41); lower nobility (Hermann von Salza 1209-39, Werner von Orseln 1324-30) and urban patricians (Karl von Trier 1311-1324), all of the Grand Masters from Winrich von Kniprode (1351-82) to Friedrich von Sachsen (1498-1510) and Albrecht von Brandenburg (1511-1525), belonged to the lower nobility.<sup>46</sup>

There is no comprehensive study of the office of Grand Master of the German Order. The Rule contains the most general of statements concerning his tasks: he should punish the disobedient and show concern for the sick.<sup>47</sup> This modest competence was deliberate for the office of Grand Master was anchored in the corporation

as a whole. In all important matters, the acquisition and alienation of property or the reception of postulants the Grand Masters had to consult all of the available brethren. Whatever the 'better part' advised had to be followed.<sup>48</sup> In less important matters he had to consult the members of his Chapter. This dialogue between the Grand Master and General Chapter continued in a restricted way once the Order had finally exchanged the desert sands for the Vistula fens. It was impracticable to summon a cumbersome General Chapter except to discuss such crucial internal questions as elections to the Grand Mastership, law making or the appointment of the senior officers. The day to day government of the Order was conducted by a council consisting of the five major officers, the Grosskomtur, Marshal, Oberste Trapier, Oberste Spittler and Tressler. Since these officers have been exhaustively studied by Milthaler and Thielen we can dispense with a detailed discussion here.<sup>49</sup>

Milthaler was concerned to correct the view that the greater officers formed a type of cabinet or that, with the exception of the Tressler, they were charged with the administration of particular departments or categories of business.<sup>50</sup> In a related way he also demonstrated that the great officers were first and foremost administrators of commanderies; local officials without any permanent competence in the central administration of Prussia. This disjuncture of titles - which were of household origin - and function was particularly evident in the cases of the Oberste Trapier and Spittler.

There was no central office for either the care of the sick or the provision of clothing in Prussia. They were honorific titles used by the commanders of Elbing and Christburg.<sup>51</sup> Again, the Marshal was originally in charge of the military system of the headquarters in Palestine. In Prussia he was principally concerned with the administration of the commandery of Königsberg. The distance from Marienburg meant that the Marshals acquired various customary supervisory powers over the neighbouring commanderies of Memel, Ragnit, Balga and Brandenburg. He was also responsible for ensuring the free flow of money, building materials and labour from the relatively developed western parts of Prussia to the under-developed east. Although the Grand Masters commonly assigned the Marshal the leadership of armies of the Order, and although his military advice was listened to with respect, the Grand Master retained the overall command and the Marshals had no monopoly of tactical decisions.<sup>52</sup>

The Grosskomtur was neither the 'inner' nor the 'foreign' minister of the Order.<sup>53</sup> Essentially, he was the major officer nearest to the Grand Master - he resided in the north-wing of the middle-castle in Marienburg - and he acted on the Grand Master's behalf in the administration of the headquarters and in leading the contingents from the commandery into battle.<sup>54</sup> It seems plausible that the Grosskomtur was originally the commander of the headquarters but that in the course of the fourteenth century this task was taken over by the House-commanders, thus freeing the Grosskomtur for a



wide variety of diplomatic and administrative tasks. A residue of tasks connected with the administration of the headquarters remained. He still led the contingents from Marienburg into battle; administered the armoury and the infirmary in the headquarters.<sup>55</sup> He also received the accounts of the Tressler and accompanied the Grand Master on diplomatic journeys.<sup>56</sup> For geographical reasons the Grosskomtur appears less concretely in the sources than either the Marshal, Oberste Spittler or Trapier. They resided in commanderies at some distance from the headquarters: they had to conduct business by letter.

The Tressler was the only major officer concerned exclusively with financial affairs although he occasionally undertook other administrative tasks. The Tressler administered the Tressel, the treasury which received the surpluses from the local officers and the profits of the Order's trade and which paid out large sums such as that used to acquire the New Mark. He also administered the Tresslerkasse which covered the expenses of the Grand Master's court and official activities, the costs of fortifying the headquarters and general administrative costs in so far as these were both covered by the treasuries of the individual houses. Finally, he administered the Marienburger Konventskasse which received the rents from the commandery of Marienburg and served to cover the costs of the Marienburg Chapter as well as the maintenance and extension of the buildings of the headquarters.<sup>57</sup>

Collectively these five officers formed the

core of the officers' council, the body which was increasingly usurping the competence of the cumbersome and infrequent General Chapter in the chain of command between Grand Master and corporation.<sup>58</sup> Since the membership of the Order mirrored the territorial fragmentation of Germany, much of the strife within the Order in the mid-fifteenth century turned on the representation of the various 'tongues' on the officers council. Under Grand Master von Rusdorf there were bitter struggles concerning the composition of both the 'inner' council - the five major officers and the commanders of Danzig and Thorn in alternation - and the 'outer' council composed of the former group and the commanders of Balga, Brandenburg, Osterode, Mewe and Rheden.<sup>59</sup> By conceding the principle of proportional allocation of offices according to territorial origins, rather than individual aptitude, von Rusdorf set the seal on the transformation of the Order into a convenience for the lower nobility of Germany.

Because the Order could dispose of a uniquely rational postal system, the officers did not need to be physically present to tender their advice. Since for religious reasons the brethren were keen time-keepers, it was possible to record the hour at which the posts-horses, letter boys, runners and couriers passed through each commandery.<sup>60</sup> The Order also used a series of postal codes according to the priority the letter was to receive. Both points may be illustrated by the

formula used on the back of a letter - letters were folded and sealed - dated 5 April 1420.

To the most worthy Grand Master with all honour, day and night without delay since particularly great power is involved. Sent from Königsberg on Friday before Easter at 9 a.m. Sent from Brandenburg on the same day at 12 noon. Sent from Balga on the same day at six after the collation. Arrived and sent from Elbing on Saturday before Easter at 8 a.m.<sup>61</sup>

As is clear from this example, the brethren used a clock much like our own consisting of two twelve hour periods.<sup>62</sup> The postal service ran through the hours of darkness too. For example, a letter dated 14 July 1429 from the commander of Memel left at 9 p.m. on a Thursday, left Königsberg at 5 p.m. on Saturday, went through Brandenburg at 8 p.m., Balga at midnight and reached Elbing at 8 p.m. on Sunday.<sup>63</sup>

The views of the Grossgebietiger could be tendered by post when changes of office were being considered. For example in a letter dated 2 May 1453 the commander of Elbing suggested various changes that could be made following the death of the commander of Brandenburg in April. The Tressler should take over in Brandenburg while the Vogt of the bishop of Ermland should become Tressler. Since the House-commander of Danzig was not willing to become Vogt, the commander recommended the House-commander of Königsberg for the post.<sup>64</sup> Again, in a letter dated 27 September 1428 to the officers in Prussia, the Grand Master announced the appointment of a new procurator in Rome. The appointment had taken place 'with the advice of our officers'.<sup>65</sup>

Of course business was also handled in meetings of the councils. Sometimes these were informal gatherings over breakfast. For example, in a letter dated 10 September 1430 the Grosskomtur informed the Grand Master of a breakfast discussion concerning the manning of certain fortresses in which the commanders of Elbing, Danzig and Mewe had taken part.<sup>66</sup> Such meetings also took place in order to thrash out the policy briefs that the emissaries of the Order took to conferences with other rulers. For example on 27 May 1443 a letter of commission was issued to the Grosskomtur, Oberspittler Heinrich von Plauen and the Prior of Frauenberg for their forthcoming meeting with the council of the margrave of Brandenburg in Frankfurt-on-the-Oder in June.<sup>67</sup> The instructions had been drawn up at a meeting of both councils in Elbing, which had included a number of jurists. The document contained two policy options. The margrave should give up his claims to the New Mark in return for 10,000-15,000 Gulden or submit them to arbitration. If he agreed to the latter solution the emissaries were to insist that either the Pope or the bishops of Augsburg, Worms and Salzburg and not the Emperor should act as arbitrators. The emissaries were also given a number of subsidiary tasks. They were to check with the duke of Stettin whether he would allow forces of the Order to enter his castles in the event of war with the dukes of Mecklenburg; they were to inspect a history book that the Vogt of the New Mark had acquired

from a Prior in Berlin to 'see whether they might find anything that might be useful to this embassy'; they were to pay the master builder in Kústrin.<sup>68</sup>

Just as the proportional representation of the various 'Tongues' was institutionalised in the course of the fifteenth century, so the power of the officers council was given statutory foundation. Grand Master Conrad von Erlichshausen's revised Rule of 1442 stated

We will that after his election  
a Grand Master be bound by oath and  
obliged to follow the advice of the  
officers council<sup>69</sup>

In an agreement drawn up by the senior officers three days before the death of Conrad von Erlichshausen early in December 1449 they swore that whichever of them was elected Grand Master - another indication of the diminishing significance of the General Chapter - was to observe thirteen articles. The officers were to have the right to transfer brethren without the Grand Master's interference.<sup>70</sup> The Grand Master was not to tax either the officers or the brethren without the consent of the innermost council.<sup>71</sup> The allocation of places on the two councils according to 'national' principles was repeated.<sup>72</sup> The German Master was told to observe the 'old customs' for the election of the Grand Masters. In other words he was to leave the task to the Prussian Gebietiger and to drop his claims based upon the Orseln 'statutes'.<sup>73</sup> The tendency towards oligarchy again seems ineluctable.

It is necessary to view the office of Grand Master in the context of the Gebietigerrat because

frequently historians - on the look out for signs of a territorial principality in the making - have tried to emancipate the highest officer from the corporation. Although Albert Klein repeatedly described the Order as a ruling oligarchy, nevertheless he claimed that the Grand Masters 'had well nigh become territorial princes in Prussia by the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries'.<sup>74</sup> Similarly Kurt Forstreuter wrote of the decision to move the headquarters from Venice to Prussia 'the Grand Master was territorial lord in Prussia. The transformation to princely power and the territorialisation of the office of Grand Master began'.<sup>75</sup>

Certainly the Grand Masters enjoyed all of the trappings of power to which a fifteenth century ruler was heir. They lived in one of the most magnificent buildings in Europe, Marienburg, which became the headquarters of the Order and normal residence of the Grand Masters after 1309. This small town on the Nogat, insignificant besides Danzig, Thorn or Elbing was probably chosen because in that year the Order acquired Pomerelia and what had once been a frontier fortress on the western flank of Prussia was thereafter centrally situated.<sup>76</sup>

The Tresslerbuch contains hundreds of payments for entertainment and minor luxuries. All were innocuous enough; the rare and costly things that powerful pious old men like to have around them. They had the services of players;<sup>77</sup> fools;<sup>78</sup> pipers;<sup>79</sup> flautists;<sup>80</sup>

Pasternak the fiddler<sup>81</sup> and Peter the painter.<sup>82</sup> They could amuse themselves with whippets;<sup>83</sup> falcons;<sup>84</sup> goshawks;<sup>85</sup> a parrot<sup>86</sup> or gaming at modest stakes.<sup>87</sup> Their chapel contained an organ.<sup>88</sup> On several occasions school children were paid to sing for the Grand Master<sup>89</sup> and there were more singular diversions such as a woman who sang with a lyre<sup>90</sup> or a songster who 'sang like a nightingale'.<sup>91</sup> There were also payments for fox-gloves<sup>92</sup> beaverskin hats;<sup>93</sup> a straw hat;<sup>94</sup> 12m for a sable coat;<sup>95</sup> silk hand towels and numerous payments for the refinements that the embroiderer's skill could bring to bear upon some of these items.<sup>96</sup> The Great Shepherds brought quantities of expensive delicacies, for example aniseed, quince, coriander and currant confectionary.<sup>97</sup> The Grand Masters were compulsively generous. In 1406 two knights received 'one of our Order's little silver shields',<sup>98</sup> each. Duke Witold's wife received a clavicorn and the King of Poland a silver jewelled cup.<sup>99</sup>

Journeys were made in great style with gifts received and given. In May 1402 the Grand Master journeyed south to Thorn to meet the King of Poland. An orgy of tipping and pious donations had begun. Four and a half marks to the servants of the King of Poland who brought game;  $\frac{1}{2}$ f. to the singing school children of Graudenz;  $\frac{1}{2}$ f. to the servant who managed to recapture the falcon that the falconer had let slip; 2sc. to the poor of St. Jurgen's in Graudenz; 2m for the Queen's players ad 3m for her husband's players;  $\frac{1}{2}$ m to the ferryman's servant; 6m to the pipers who played the

Grand Master over the Vistula; 2m to the inn-keeper who accompanied the bishop of Poznan.<sup>100</sup> Each journey was the occasion for donations to particular altars or to those suffering from some misfortune. In 1408 the Grand Master gave ½f. to the sick in the village of Neunteich; 1f. to two blind Prussians; ½f. to a drunken Prussian; 4sc. to an old man whom he had encountered on the road.<sup>101</sup> In the same year he travelled to Memel. The servant who heated his bathtub in Bystern received 6 shillings, a Russian falconer received the price of a pair of boots and shoes and a dairy-maid in Ragnit received 1f. for her new-born child (1 fird. eyner fyemayt zu Ragnith, der eyn kint was gemacht).<sup>102</sup> In terms of the Grand Masters personal expenditure, these outings were expensive. In 1403 they amounted to more than double the expenditure on arms - 700m compared with 300m - and were not significantly cheaper than the 850m expended upon gifts, payments to officials and personal necessities.<sup>103</sup>

The Grand Masters income came from several sources. Firstly there were the four Kammerballeien in the Empire, Bozen, Austria, Koblenz and Alsace-Burgundy which, as the name suggests, belonged to the Grand Masters Kammer.<sup>104</sup> The richest of these 'cameral bailiwicks' was Koblenz which supplied the Grand Masters with Rhenish wine. All four also gave the Grand Master extraordinary aid in times of war and all four were supposed to pay an annual rent. This was sometimes the subject of dispute. They were also supposed to



support the Order proctors in Rome, although the latter also received assistance from the other eight bailiwicks and from the Prussian commanderies.<sup>105</sup>

In addition to the Kammerballeien, the Grand Masters received an income from several local administrative units in Pomerelia and the Culmerland. These were the commanderies Tuchel, Papau and Nessau which together rendered about 1,000m p.a.; the Vogteien and Pflegerämter of Dirschau, Butow, Roggenhausen, Bratean and Leipe which collectively rendered about 3,000m p.a. and lastly the two priests in Danzig and Thorn who rendered about 130m p.a.<sup>106</sup> The Vogteien and Pflegerämter were particularly suited for this function since, unlike the commanderies, they had no chapter to support.<sup>107</sup> In each of these cases the Grand Masters were in receipt of roughly two thirds of the income of the office. For example, in 1401 Bratean had an income of 613m: the Grand Master received 500m.<sup>108</sup> In comparative terms the Grand Masters income was half that of the Marienburg Chapter<sup>109</sup> and somewhat less than the rent receipts of the commandery of Elbing.<sup>110</sup> The officers who met following Comrad von Erlichshausen's death were concerned to keep their superior's income to these modest proportions. The fourth article of their agreement sought to ensure that the officers in each commandery and not the Tressler received the worldly goods of deceased brethren and the fifth article sought to prohibit a future Grand Master from either altering the administrative geography of the commanderies or keeping a commandery chapterless

for his own benefit.<sup>111</sup> It seems that in terms of income, there was nothing, as far as the officers were concerned, ineluctable about 'the transformation to princely power',<sup>112</sup> that the Grand Masters were supposedly undergoing.

The abiding importance of the corporate principle - albeit as represented by the Gebietigerrat - as a control on the power of the Grand Master is evident in every branch of the Grand Master's activity. The reforming articles issued by Paul von Rusdorf in December 1427 had been hammered out by his officers meeting in a chapter on Sunday 7 December.<sup>113</sup> Conrad von Erlichshausen's 'Landesordnung der Niederlande' of October 1444 was issued after taking counsel with the bishops of Ermland and Samland 'and our officers and the officers of the low country' (unde unser gebietiger und amptslute der nydderlande).<sup>114</sup> The same Grand Master's biographer Murawski who was keen to ascribe a reforming impulse to von Erlichshausen, actually has to concede that even the laws that von Erlichshausen added to the Order statutes and which bear his name, cannot actually or definitely be ascribed to him alone.<sup>115</sup> These laws were drawn up and issued by the Grand Master in a General Chapter held in Marienburg in August 1442. Three master copies were made for respectively Horneck, Riga and Marienburg. The latter copy is now in Berlin.<sup>116</sup> These master copies of the Rule, Laws and Customs were designed to correct a situation in which too many copies of the Statutes either contained too much or too little - an unspecific reference

to the German Master's attempts to bolster his authority with the aid of the forged Orseln 'statutes'.<sup>117</sup> Their contents reflect the distance that the Order had travelled from the austerities of the Rule. The brethren were forbidden to enter into any kind of treaty, alliance, union or party with the laity.<sup>118</sup> The possession of money or property was forbidden in the strongest of terms.<sup>119</sup> Attempts were made to stop the process whereby the Order was becoming a rest home for the German nobility; the granting of offices for life; houses; chambers; uses or fruits of office - in other words all pseudo pensions for 'retired' officers and brethren were to be stopped.<sup>120</sup>

The Gebietiger also accompanied the Grand Master to meetings with the Prussian Estates. For example in November 1441 Conrad von Erlichshausen met the Estates in Elbing. He was accompanied by his officers including the commanders of Elbing and Danzig. The latter had recently been on a mission to Copenhagen. Everyone present clearly recognised that the Grand Master had to take counsel with the officers. The representative from Culm Tyleman von Hirken at one point suggested to the Grand Master that he take counsel with the officers and prelates on the issue of Dutch purchase of Prussian shipping.<sup>121</sup> On another issue, 'the officers then spoke together',<sup>122</sup> and over lunch they turned over the question of what to do about the rebellious peasants in the bishopric of Ermland. Returning at 2 p.m., the Grand Master announced 'we, the prelates and our officers think

it fitting that one fixes a day to choose the officer who will be sent there (to Ermland)'.<sup>123</sup> A clash between the landed gentry and the towns over market rights was followed by a compromise statement by the Grand Master in whose formation the officers had taken part.<sup>124</sup>

It seems that whatever aspect of the office of Grand Master one cares to look at, the corporate principle is in evidence, albeit pared down in practice to mean the most senior officers. Although the Grand Masters had the trappings of power and although as the most senior officer their word obviously carried great weight, any pretensions that any of them had to territorial princely status were counterbalanced by the statutorily sanctioned rights of their fellow officers. This was no guarantee against a Grand Master having pretensions, but as in the case of von Plauen, he could be swiftly and smoothly deposed and put out to pasture. No poison or assassins dagger were necessary: the insignia of office were snatched and a resignation received by the General Chapter. In the first half of the fifteenth century, the Order was still in all senses an aristocratic corporation of an oligarchical type.

### The Way of Life

The postulant dedicated himself to a way of life that had at its core the three fundamental vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.<sup>125</sup> While Old Testament

warriors were called into service as biblical prefigurements of the military order knight, the life of Christ was employed to give actuality to the three fundamental vows. Christ 'pursued poverty throughout His life until He hung naked through us upon the Cross': He had come 'not to do my will but my Father's will who sent me'.<sup>126</sup>

The three vows were the outline of a composition whose details were added in the remaining Rules, Laws and Customs. All were designed to destroy individual appetency and to submit the will to the collective purpose; the annihilation of the enemies of the Faith, the reception of guests and pilgrims and the care of the sick.<sup>127</sup> The brethren should be 'humbly obedient and should in all things break their own wills' (so sulen die brudere demutecliche gehorsam sin unde in allen dingen brechen eigenen willen).<sup>128</sup> Individual idiosyncracies had no place in the Order. The brethren were to dress in a uniform way: in white clothing marked with black crosses. Nothing was to be 'too long, short, tight or wide'.<sup>129</sup> Shoes were to be plain and unadorned with buckles or tapering toepieces (ane snure, ane snebele unde rinken).<sup>130</sup> The hair and beards were to be worn in such a style that the wearer should be immediately recognisable as a brother of the Order.<sup>131</sup> Meals were to be consumed communally in a modest, noiseless manner with ears 'hungering after the word of God'.<sup>132</sup> They were to sleep in dormitories, clad in their trousers and underclothes and with a light burning throughout the night.<sup>133</sup> As

far as the outer world was concerned the brethren were to appear bereft of all the conventional trappings of their class. Saddles and shields were not to be painted with gold or silver 'or with other worldly colours'.<sup>134</sup> They were to avoid tournaments, weddings and christenings, they should not mention female names (vermiden die gespreche der wibesnamen), or kiss boys or women.<sup>135</sup> The latter included their own mothers and sisters 'lest it lead to unchastity'. There was to be no privacy. Letters received could be scrutinised by a superior and presents received could be arbitrarily handed over to another brother.<sup>136</sup> Together the brethren were to appear on the battlefield as a disciplined unity oblivious to individual repute or the chivalric niceties, dealing hammer blows to the enemies of the Faith.<sup>137</sup> They were to be constantly reminded of their vows by regular readings of the Rule and Laws at Christmas, Easter and each Sunday.<sup>138</sup>

Any modern student of the Rule, or indeed of the history of the Order, is bound to ask the question why should anyone be prepared to submit himself to such a colourless existence? In order to answer this question it is necessary to look at the way in which the brethren spent their time and at the material existence in an Order commandery. For although historians have often pointed to the prodigious quantities of inventories as evidence for the increasing use of the written word in the Order's administration in the fifteenth century,<sup>139</sup> they have been reluctant to discuss their contents.

The key unit of lordship in the territories of the German Order was the commandery. There were eleven in the Culmerland, ten in Prussia and five in Pomerelia.<sup>140</sup> The commandery was an administrative district sometimes subdivided into smaller units called Waldämter or Pflegerämter, ruled by a commander and his officers from a fortified residence. The latter evolved from clay, mud and wood structures serving a purely military function in the years of conquest into imposing brick edifices - such as at Marienburg or Ragnit - with numerous rooms and elaborate fortifications.<sup>141</sup> Massive embodiments of the fact that the lordship of the Order was, like all lordship, based upon military power.<sup>142</sup>

As Voigt pointed out long ago, the brother's day was probably largely taken up with religious services and official tasks. The brethren observed the seven canonical hours beginning with matins and ending with compline with meals in between at 9-10 a.m. and 4-5 p.m. Collation, the light meal allowed on days of fasting, was taken between 6-7 p.m.<sup>143</sup> Mass was sung - if the personnel were sufficient - thrice weekly by the priest-brothers and the knight-brothers received the sacrament seven times a year. The daily services were relaxed for those occupying offices in the Order.<sup>144</sup>

Since the Statutes specified that 'every officer shall show in writing how he found the possessions of the house and how he left it in ready cash and debts',<sup>145</sup> and because, as has often been pointed out, the administration depended to a high degree upon the written word,

much of the officer's time must have been taken up with counting the contents of the various storerooms - or checking the arithmetic of subordinates - and setting his findings down on paper. For example, on 16 December 1423 Conrad von Erlichshausen replaced Jorgen von Sekendorff as Vogt in Grebin. The latter left an inventory of the contents of the office. Assuming that items like arrows were bundled into 'scores' which spared him the tedium of counting every arrow, the Vogt still had to count and itemise over 2,300 objects ranging from knives and axes to quantities of grain.<sup>146</sup> On 24 September 1425 von Erlichshausen had to go through the laborious business again, noting that now there were 1,661 sheep and 7 buckets rather than the 1,222 sheep and 5 buckets that his predecessor had bequeathed to him.<sup>147</sup> These change of office inventories were forwarded to Marienburg. They gave the headquarters a birds-eye view of the wealth and strategic resources of each commandery, enabling the most senior officers to decide what burdens the commandery could be expected to bear in the service of the Order as a whole.<sup>148</sup>

The officers were not just conservators of the legacies of their predecessors. In addition to keeping existing buildings in good repair, they had to improve their commandery either directly by adding on a piece of roof or by installing new enterprises to increase the income of the commandery. As we shall see in a later chapter, the visitors sent by the Grand Master to inspect the commanderies were constantly being told that some new building project was in hand. This almost



proprietary attitude of the commanders towards their houses may be exemplified by a few letters. The first, dated 13 November 1433, was a report to the Grand Master from the commander of Nessau on the response of other officers to the Grand Master's call for financial support for the commandery. The commander had detected a hardness of heart in some of his colleagues.

may your worthiness know that the commander from Rheden and also the one from Graudenz will not give me any money and in particular, the one from Rheden said that if I ask him for it or sing for it he will give me no money and he baldly said that he owes me nothing. Also dear lord Grand Master, the commanders of Balga and Danzig have given me nothing ... I ask your Grace to help me with the abovementioned officers and to keep them to it and moreover to order them to deliver the money to me. If that doesn't happen I cannot maintain the house on nothing and must therefore give it up.<sup>149</sup>

The Grand Master's appeal to the commander of Althaus for surplus cash in June of the same year also fell upon stony ground. The commander replied 'I have nothing over that I can spare and my Chapter neither'.<sup>150</sup> A contribution from one commandery to another was the subject of a letter dated 24 May 1453 from the commander of Thorn to the Grand Master. The commander of Althaus was refusing to hand over money that had been allocated by the Grand Master and Gebietigerrat to the commandery of Thorn. Without the money - which he called a tax - the commander would be unable to increase the resources of his commandery. In the accompanying enclosures, the commander pointed to the number of times he had had to

send money to other commanderies; to the wage costs of demesne officials and servants and to the money which he had had to pay out at harvest time when he had entered into the office. Despite these problems, he had been a busy man. The grain cellars had been improved at a cost of 76m; the roof on the house (von eynen gebil czum andern), the commander's chamber and the buildings in the courtyard had all been improved. He had built a new cow shed and a house for the demesne servant and he had undertaken the clearing of overgrown and deserted Hufen (Item vil wustes erbes das vorwachsen was laszen vorth brengen und roden). Elsewhere he had built another cow shed, a bakery and a new windmill costing 150m. In Weipiczs he had stocked 17 deserted Hufen with cows and grain 'from the demesne'. He had built two new mills and improved all of the others 'so that one may enjoy the rents'. He had had occupied over 100 Hufen as well as vacant inns, stalls and gardens. He allowed that the wine crop had been disappointing and that the ferries on the Vistula were not yielding what they might since trade was bad. The letter encapsulates the attitude of officers of the Order to their offices; fussy, pedantic, self-justificatory and purposeful.<sup>151</sup>

The commandery of Elbing contained about forty brethren in the decade 1441-51. An inventory dated November 1451 recorded their 'nationalities', titles and state of health. In that year there were 41 brothers; 2 Lusatians; 5 Meisseners; 4 Stettiners; 2 Silesians; 5 Thuringians; 3 Voigtlanders; 8 Rhinelanders; 4

Franconians; 1 Transylvanian; 3 Swabians and 1 Bavarian. There were four priest-brothers and five of the brothers were in the infirmary. Two of the Thuringians were counts: count Hartman and count Frederich von Orlmunde.<sup>152</sup>

Unfortunately this inventory does not give us the offices held by these men. An inventory from a decade earlier mentions seventeen separate offices ranging from the commander Heinrich Reuss von Plauen down to Querfart the door-keeper and Oberstolz the Master Gardener. All of the officers and most of the non-office holding brethren had at least two and in many cases three horses as well as their own harness.<sup>153</sup>

Another inventory dated 8 May 1440 itemised what these men had at their disposal in the way of arms, comestibles, utensils, ecclesiastical vessels and books. The church contained 30 items made entirely from silver or with silver parts. For example there were four silver crosses, one with a wooden base, monstrances, pectoral crosses and an incense boat. There was also a sculpture of the Virgin and Child adorned with silver crowns and a wooden sculpture of saints. There were 31 Latin books including works on the letters of St. Paul and Gregory on Ezechiel; 37 service books and 9 books in German including the Order Rule and Privileges, a Lives of the Fathers, a bible and a 'Roman chronicle' (romische cronica). The brethren liked to appear well dressed in the House of God. The inventory itemised 144 separate pieces of clothing, some of which is described with great

attention to detail. A green and red silk cassock, 2 golden cassocks, one with a gold and green bird embroidered upon it, 1 white silk cassock and so forth. Some of the vestments could be passed over as 21 'gemeyne caseln'.<sup>154</sup>

The powder chamber (pulverkamer), contained 59 guns (lothbochszen), 12½ barrels of powder and 2 of saltpetre. A neighbouring room contained 1,800 score of arrows. The armoury included 21 iron helmets, 17 breastplates and 7 pairs of armoured gauntlets (hanczken). There were two pairs of arm guards and 1 'grusner' to protect someone's upper thigh. Since the brethren had to bring their own armour upon joining the Order these odd items are likely to have been replacement parts.<sup>155</sup>

The cellar was well provided. There were 430 barrels of beer including 10 barrels of 'old beer'. Another cellar contained 4 barrels of honey, 80 score of fat, 50 silver spoons and various tin and steel cooking utensils as well as 18 table cloths and glasses. In the Master of the Kitchen's domain there were 428 sides of beef and pork, tongue, half a barrel of butter, 2½ barrels of pickled meat, 16 oxen and 2 Last of salt. There were 93 cooking utensils including a fire guard, a copper sieve and a kitchen axe.<sup>156</sup>

The meat for the kitchens as well as the stocks of horses were reared on the demesnes of the commandery. Since the Order received rents in grain it did not need to engage in arable farming to any great extent itself.<sup>157</sup>

The demesnes in the commandery were at Preussisch-Holland, Mohrunge, Ortelsburg, Liebstadt, Bordehnen, Locken, Workallen and Machwitzhof. The stud farms were at Draushof, Neuhof and Weeskenhof.<sup>158</sup>

In November 1416 these three stud farms contained 154 mares, 46 foals, 27 foals of either two or three years of age, 12 three year olds, 17 older mares, 121 draught horses, letter-ponies (sweiken), and 19 foals in the process of being broken in. The commander's 17 chargers and 16 stallions were kept on other unnamed demesnes.<sup>159</sup>

The number of signeurial horses on the demesnes of the commandery between 1384-1432 was<sup>160</sup>

<u>1384</u>	<u>1396</u>	<u>1402</u>	<u>1404</u>	<u>1412</u>	<u>1416</u>	<u>1428</u>	<u>1432</u>
500	580	470	606	395	429	513	456

In 1428 the distribution of all types of livestock on each of the demesnes was recorded in a change of office inventory.<sup>161</sup>

<u>Demesne</u>	<u>Horses</u>	<u>Cows</u>	<u>Swine</u>	<u>Sheep</u>
Preuss. Holland	-	22	120	-
Draushof	146	146	142	-
Weeskenhof	87	92	198	690
Bordehnen	116	102	195	761
Neuhof	104	161	174	-
Mohrunge	19	46	57	-
Locken	-	6	10	-
Workallen	31	40	44	-
Machwitzhof	10	6	7	-
<hr/> Total	513	621	947	1451

The demesnes at Mohrunen and Ortelsburg possessed fishing tackle, in the first case in the form of 12 ice axes and an old net which was still in use. There were also 4 Vistula craft and a 'Deymschiff'.<sup>162</sup> The demesne at Neuhof had 73 beehives in 1404.<sup>163</sup> Each of the demesnes had a number of servants who received wages. For example, Neuhof had 11 including two dairy-maids, a house servant, a shepherd, a baker and Agatha the 'vihemutter'.<sup>164</sup> Weeskenhof had 15 servants including one who looked after the swine at mast.<sup>165</sup> Bordehnen had eight.<sup>166</sup>

Although most of the brethren in the commandery of Elbing probably lived a conventional life in Elbing, the shape of the commandery, formed by the necessities of conquest, colonisation and the need to localise lordship meant that some of them would spend their time in one of the outlying houses. These were Preussisch-Holland, Ortelsburg and Mohrunen - the seats of Pfleger and Muhlhausen the seat of a Waldmeister.<sup>167</sup> These were fortified residences with a chapel, kitchen, cellars, granaries, bakeries, breweries, a powder chamber and at Ortelsburg an ironworks.<sup>168</sup> As Toeppen pointed out in the case of Seehesten, the Pfleger had numerous servants. At Seehesten in 1451 these included a chaplain, a scribe, an interpreter au fait with both Polish and Prussian and 38 other servants not including maids, wives and children.<sup>169</sup> A series of early sixteenth century inventories entitles us to suppose that a similar number of people were employed in and around the lesser houses of the

commandery of Elbing. In 1507 there were 19 servants at Mohrunen and 100 at Preussisch-Holland.<sup>170</sup> There were 40 at Ortelsburg.<sup>171</sup> The demesnes at Neuhof and Bordehnen were more in the nature of occasional stopping off places. In both the commanders of Elbing had a room and the use of a featherbed.<sup>172</sup>

The work of the Pfleger was various. For those on the frontier, one of the principle tasks was to gather intelligence concerning their Slav neighbours to the south. A due called the Wartegeld paid by the freemen was supposed to cover the cost of keeping look-outs in advanced positions.<sup>173</sup> Since it lay hard by any potential enemy, a Pflegeramt like Ortelsburg was generously stocked with armaments. In 1416 Ortelsburg contained 5 cannon, 7 guns, a barrel of powder, 60 crossbows and 15,000 arrows.<sup>174</sup>

Above all else, these houses were collection points in the process of appropriating the peasant's surplus grain and cash in the form of rent or seigneurial monopolies. In the commandery of Elbing there were nine seigneurial mills<sup>175</sup> although after 1429 the mill at Passenheim near Ortelsburg was rented to the incipient town community for 26½m a year.<sup>176</sup> From an account sheet dated 1431 for the two mills at Muhlhausen and Schonenberg in the Waldamt Muhlhausen it is possible to reconstruct their yields and running costs. In that year the mills profited by 7,102 bushels of malt; 7,102 bushels of rye and 1,036 bushels of wheat.<sup>177</sup> The mill-penny brought in 31½m 2½ scot. Virtually all of the malt was used for

beer (6,500 bushels), or vinegar 90 bushels.<sup>178</sup> Twenty bushels were sent to Neuhof. Roughly two thirds of the wheat was ground into 'white flour' and sent to the bakery.<sup>179</sup> Of course the mills were expensive to maintain. If the wealth of the Order enabled it to construct mills in the first place, it was also saddled with the running costs. In 1431 these were just under 60m - including millstones at 3½m each and the skills of craftsmen who were competent to deal with wooden and metal moving parts.<sup>180</sup> Then there was the wage bill for the mill personnel. In 1431 these included a scribe and a cook and eleven others.<sup>181</sup>

In the main house at Elbing, the number of servants resulted in an elaborate pecking order. The so-called economic plan of the commandery of Elbing - a series of inventories, accounts and rent rolls that were copied into one folio in 1386 - gives us some inkling as to who could expect what.<sup>182</sup> The 'hern' as they were significantly called, could expect to receive 4 white and two grey Mechlen cloths for cloaks and 10 other cloths for trousers. The commander's servant received 3 half lengths of English and 4 whole cloths from Courtrol. Every other year the priest-brothers were each to receive 'a beautiful cloak'.<sup>183</sup>

There were 152 servants 'without the guests, who come from day to day' (di tag by tage czukomen).<sup>184</sup> These included a gardener, two oxherds, a shepherd, the House-commander's stable-boy, a doorman to assist the Master Porter, 10 in the smithy and 4 in the bakery



and so forth. Each servant received a varying amount of bread per week. The gardener and the dairymaid received 21 loaves each: the vet and the saddler 21 white loaves each.<sup>185</sup>

The pecking order continued in the refectory. The deacon and subdeacon could expect the 'lord's' food on Fridays and feast days; on other days they had to make do with three dishes, cheese and white bread.<sup>186</sup> The House-commander's scribe and his servants and the two cellar servants received the same food as the deacons but not the cheese. They had to sit at the end of the table where the younger brothers sat 'and no one else sits next to them!' Room was to be made on this table for passing musicians, necessary no doubt to soothe the headaches and resentments occasioned by such elaborate placing arrangements.

This picture of corporate well-being could easily be repeated for other large houses such as at Thorn,<sup>187</sup> Königsberg,<sup>188</sup> or Ragnit,<sup>189</sup> but such repetition would not add to understanding. The contrast afforded by life in two smaller houses of the Order is of interest. The comforts of life were not so much in evidence in out-of-the way houses. The Pflegeramt of Lochstadt was occupied by Heinrich von Plauen between 28 May and 28 December 1429. It lay like a lighthouse out on the spit in the Kurisches Haff, a small square building that was planned for a larger personnel but never quite achieved its intended importance. If the Ordensstaat had an Elba at its disposal then Lochstädt was it. The contrast

with Elbing was striking. The Church contained 7 service books, 2 German books, 2 crosses, 2 monstrances, 5 choir-caps and 2 silver ampules.<sup>190</sup> There was no armoury. The kitchen contained  $\frac{1}{2}$  barrel of herring, 7 of cod, 2 of oil, 30 sides of meat, 2 pieces of mutton, 42 of pork, 12 strings of sausages, 2 barrels of salt and 39 utensils. In the cellar there were 4 barrels of honey, 1 large barrel of old beer, 20 large barrels of other beers and 1 large barrel of old Danzig beer. In fact the Pflegeramt was little more than a cheese factory. The cow stalls contained 51 cows and 14 calves, 8 oxen and 900 sheep. There were 7 milk pails. The house contained 2,500 ordinary cheeses and 3,000 'hernkase' - cheese for the knights.<sup>191</sup> From a list of the men in the Königsberg chapter, the parent house of Lochstadt, it is possible to add that the house included 1 priest-brother and a Master of Amber in 1437.<sup>192</sup> Von Plauen - and some of his successors - not surprisingly hated the place. It needed repair, he had been reduced to eating black bread, the commanders of Königsberg and Balga took his provisions, and his successors rents and fish.<sup>193</sup>

The commandery of Schlochau housed 15 brethren in 1437.<sup>194</sup> Accordingly it lay roughly on a par with Ragnit (13)<sup>195</sup> or Mewe (15)<sup>196</sup> but was much smaller than Königsberg (46),<sup>197</sup> Brandenburg (40)<sup>198</sup> or Danzig (35).<sup>199</sup> As in Elbing, the church was rich in adornment. There was a silver-gilt cross, a glass vessel 'full of saints' and covered by a cloth, the head of St.

Patropalien, an organ, 126 vestments and additions to them including an Arras cassock in blue and green and another in blue and green silk. There were 20 Latin service books and 13 books in German including an Apocalypse, a 'Roman chronicle', a book on the Paternoster, a life of Dorothea and a Roland book. The kitchen on the date in question contained 100 sides of meat, 24 pieces of game, 12 barrels of salt, 700 common cheeses and 300 'herrenkese', 1 barrel of butter, 1½ lbs. of pepper, 1 lb of saffran and over 20 barrels of beer in the cellar. The armoury contained 40 items including 15 pointed helmets and 6 suits of iron armour.<sup>200</sup>

In addition to these material and social attractions of life in a commandery of the Order, there was the prospect of exercising judicial lordship on behalf of the corporation over those who were its justiciables. Essentially this meant the native Prussians and the tenants of those landlords not granted the higher jurisdiction. The latter was rarely granted to either the village mayors or the holders of Dienstgütern.<sup>201</sup>

Unfortunately the records for a study of the Order's judicial activities are very sparse. They consist of wax tablets recording cases heard in the commandery of Danzig in the beginning of the fifteenth century. Bertling and Buchwald, who edited the Danzig and Copenhagen tablets also reconstructed the procedure observed in the courts.<sup>202</sup> The courts met in definite places and at definite times - in Sulmain, Dirschau, Putzig and Lauenburg.<sup>203</sup>

The aggrieved party or his relatives and friends normally initiated the case.

Schessemer has charged that Slusow jeske and Stephen and the third whose name I don't know have wounded Bartke on the main road<sup>204</sup>

Nicolaus the coppersmith accuses Christianus Frankenstein that he attacked his wife by night on the open road<sup>205</sup>

Eliebeth von Polan charges Woycech von Belowycz that he killed her husband by night on the open road<sup>206</sup>

Sometimes the commander brought the charges:

Item my lord charges Mykusch that he assaulted Maltys von Elnysch<sup>207</sup>

If he were present, the accused had the opportunity to defend himself against the accusations. If he were absent, which was usual in cases of murder or robbery, then the authorities had to bring him before the court. The accused received three summonses. If he ignored the first two, he had to pay a fine.

Hans czappe has summoned Jesken von Tuchlin twice. He did not appear and is fined 1m<sup>208</sup>

Beir's son has summoned Jeske von Poblocz once and he did not appear, owes 1m<sup>209</sup>

If the accused ignored the third summons then he was outlawed. He had ignored the law so therefore he was not entitled to its protection:

A peasant from Banin accused Matys that he cut down his brother on the open road. Concerning which he summonsed him to court three times (vor gerichte geladen czu dren malen), and he has not appeared, therefore he is outlawed (in desz landis achte geton)<sup>210</sup>

Stujtke von Manschow accuses Reddow von der 1 ... that he murdered his son on the road and he has been summonsed 3 times and has not appeared, therefore he is outlawed<sup>211</sup>

There were also penalties for those who having initiated a charge wasted the time of the court by not pursuing it

Michel de Sackow owes 1m because he did not pursue the case that he made public (das h' sine sache nicht gevordert hat die her gelutbart hat)<sup>212</sup>

After the charges, defence and witnesses had been heard, a process that was often spread over several 'Dingtage', the jurors discovered the verdict. This was passed on to the judge who announced it to the parties involved and pronounced sentence. The severity of the sentence was determined by a variety of circumstantial factors: whether the crime was committed at night; on the open road; within the 'four posts' i.e. the home of the victim; whether the victim suffered a number of wounds, whether they were conspicuous or not, whether robbery had been committed and so forth.<sup>213</sup> The commander could temper justice with mercy:

Item Nitcze accuses Peter starost from Miloschow that he struck him 4 wounds and robbed him of a spear and 2m on the open road. Concerning this he has confessed and put himself in my lord's mercy and has been fined 10m and my lord has forgiven him 3m<sup>214</sup>

A number of tentative conclusions may be drawn from these facts of material and social life in commanderies of the Order. Life in the Order was regimented, with definite tasks and definite ranks. Everyone had his place. A house like Elbing was lavishly endowed with servants.

The cellars and food stores contained large quantities of beer, cheese and meat. The churches were adorned with costly vessels and vestments. The demesnes were richly stocked with horses and other livestock whose fodder came in the form of rent. Life would run its course in the relative comfort of an Order infirmary. Above all, life in the Order was secure, or more secure than that eked out by a member of the Adelsproletariat<sup>215</sup> glumly pondering how to match his falling income with the rising cost of consumer goods and envious of the power of princes and townsmen. In the Order these were problems shared. In the Order the nobleman was part of a great institutionalised lordship with a long history of feats of arms. He was the embodiment of two great ideals - the monastic and chivalric - and, the representative of a powerful lordship. In the Order the nobleman was still a somebody.

### Last Exit

When Death started to lay his hand upon an Order member he received the last sacrament and made his confession to the priest-brothers. Two knight-brothers and a priest-brother then sealed his effects and these were in turn locked up and sealed by the House-commander.<sup>216</sup> Any gold, silver, money or jewellery were to be sent to the Tressler in Marienburg accompanied by a letter to the Grand Master, an interesting commentary on the observance of the vow of Christ-like poverty. News of

the brother's death was circulated in a letter called a Todenbrief so that masses and prayers could be said and a vigil kept for the departed.<sup>217</sup>

The brethren were forbidden to make testaments or death bed dispositions without the permission of the Grand Master. A rather macabre correspondence indicates that this rule was strictly enforced. On 11 August 1448 the commander of Elbing Heinrich Reuss von Plauen wrote to Grand Master von Erlichshausen concerning a brother called 'big Nick' (lange nickel), who, very sick, had been abducted from his solitary outpost in Wickerau by some friars whom one may assume were Dominicans.<sup>218</sup> When word reached him of this outrage, the House-commander Wilhelm von Schonenberg went to the Dominicans and asked 'big Nick' about his possessions. Since he could not tell him anything, von Schonenberg asked the Prior. The latter, rather hastily, volunteered that he did not know anything about them and that 'he had not had a penny from him'. The House-commander then questioned big Nick's servant who disloyally said that he had seen his master give the Prior 'golt und gelt'. Von Schonenberg returned to the Prior who now conceded that the sick brother had given 10m to the friary. On hearing this tale, von Plauen sent the House-commander straight back to warn the brother that no brother could make a testament and that should one do so, the corpse would be 'buried in the field'. This gloomy threat soon introduced the sum of 50m into the conversation:

We called the Prior before us and asked  
who had permitted him to carry one of

our brothers into his convent, he answered that he had done it for the Lord's sake; we asked him where the money was and where the clothing had got to, and he said that he had not received more than 10m from him.

Still dissatisfied, they ordered the hapless Prior into their commandery and 'talked with him so long' that he confessed to having received 50m from big Nick, promising to return it to them the next day. Von Plauen asked the Grand Master to apply pressure upon the Dominicans and how he was to proceed with the sick man who it was said was not going to last the night.

The last page of von Erlichshausen's visitation instructions for the Culmerland of January 1448 contains stipulations on testaments. Essentially it says that they were forbidden and if made they were to be considered null and void (krafftlosz).<sup>219</sup> However, despite this categorical statement from January, there was still doubt upon the matter in August. On 12 August, the commander of Christburg - like von Plauen a member of the Gebietigerrat - wrote to the Grand Master explaining that he did not know how to advise him in the case of big Nick but that the Grand Master would know the new regulations. Unhelpfully he added that it was in the Grand Master's power to be merciful but 'what your Grace will do in this matter, I leave to your Grace'.<sup>220</sup>

Von Plauen was also at a loss. On Monday he wrote to von Erlichshausen asking him to write back 'by the hour' enclosing a copy of the relevant rule. The Grand Master was to write a warning letter to the



Dominicans and testaments were to be covered as quickly as possible in a general ordinance before other religious picked up the habit of abducting the dying. As for big Nick, he was 'not yet dead' and had become delirious (nicht bey seiner rechten vornunfft).<sup>221</sup> Von Plauen asked the Grand Master to be merciful. It was all over by 13 August. Von Plauen wrote to von Erlichshausen that big Nick had died in the night and asked for instructions concerning the disposal of the corpse 'which stinks so evilly that no one can stay near it'.<sup>222</sup>

A few years later a rather different attitude towards testaments prevailed. In a letter dated 31 August 1453 the House-commander of Holland informed the Grand Master that a brother Panewitz 'being of sound mind' had made a testament. The House-commander had asked him 'whom he would like to give or favour' with his gold and money. Panewitz replied that the money and goods that 'he had acquired with the Order in various ways' should be the subject of an agreement between his brother and the commander. His property consisted of 150m and 123 Hungarian Gulden in cash, two gold rings and a large silver belt (und den grosen solberyn gortil). In his testament he said that his brother was to have his possessions but that in the event of the latter's death they were to go to 'his lord' the commander of Elbing. In any event he gave his brother steel armour, a sword a small silver belt, two horses and 10 Hungarian Gulden. He sealed the testament in the presence of

seven witnesses.<sup>223</sup>

The 'Nachlassinventar' dated 30 June 1454 of the Vogt of Brathean Frederich von Nickericz contains his death bed dispositions and amounts to a testament. His possessions included 31 Hungarian Gulden, 29 Rhenish Gulden, 2 Nobles, 2 other Gulden and 1 Krone, a silver cup, 2 silver belts, and 11 spoons. He detailed his various debts and suggested ways of satisfying his creditors. He owed big Hermann 100m: big Hermann was to have the silver belts. Caspar Slyngebier was to be paid off in grain. He owed various traders money but, an aristocrat to the last, he could not remember their names. He owed Balthasar Nickericz a horse worth 20m and various small sums of beer, butter, eggs and cheese. He wanted his brother Nicolas, the Hospitaller in Elbing to have 10m in addition to the 17½m he had paid to Jacob the doctor. He owed a priest-brother 1m for a psalter and 7½m to the Master Cellarer in Elbing who had given him money when he first came out to Prussia (do her ins land was gekomen). There was no more talk of burying anyone in the field and the existence of personal wealth and the right to dispose of it outside the Order had been cautiously acknowledged.

NOTES

1. E. Maschke, 'Die Inneren Wandlungen des Deutschen Ritterordens', Geschichte und Gegenwartsbewusstsein. Festschrift für Hans Rothfels zum 70. Geburtstag, ed. W. Besson and F. Frhr. Hiller von Gaetringen (Göttingen 1963), pp. 254-255. r/
2. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10900.
3. Maschke, 'Die Inneren Wandlungen', p. 262; R. Wenskus, 'Das Ordensland Preussen als Territorialstaat des 14. Jahrhunderts' in Der Deutsche Territorialstaat im 14. Jahrhundert, ed. H. Patze for the Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für mittelalterliche Geschichte (Sigmaringen 1970), 1, p. 356; see also, E. Keyser 'Die Bevölkerung Danzigs im 13 und 14 Jahrhundert und ihre Herkunft', Pfingstblätter des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins (Lübeck 1928), Blatt xv, especially pp. 21-23 for the limited number of immigrants from southern Germany (0.7%), between 1364-99 and A. Semrau, 'Die Herkunft der Elbinger Bevölkerung von der Grundung der Stadt bis 1353', Mitteilungen des Copernicus - Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn, 32 (1924), pp. 9-62, and K. Forstreuter, 'Latein und Deutsch in Deutschen Orden', Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes Festschrift für E. Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg 1963), p. 375.
4. E. Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht im Ordenslande Preussen und das Mittelalterliche Europa, Veröffentlichungen der Niedersächsischen Archivverwaltung (Göttingen 1955), 6, p. 9.
5. Ibid., p. 10.
6. Ibid., p. 34.
7. W. Kuhn, 'Ritterorden als Grenzhüter des Abendlandes gegen das östliche Heidentum', Ostdeutsche Wissenschaft, Jahrbuch des Ostdeutschen Kulturrates (München 1959), 6, p.7.
8. On the 'Bollwerk-Theorie' see W. Wippermann, Der Ordensstaat als Ideologie Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin (Berlin 1979), 24, pp. 329-330 especially note 55. For an example of this type of presupposition in use see A. Werminghoff 'Der Deutsche Orden und die Stände in Preussen bis zum zweiten Thorner Frieden im Jahre 1466!', Pfingstblätter des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins (München and Leipzig 1912), Blatt viii, pp. 4-5.

9. J. Voigt, Geschichte des Deutschen Ritterordens in seinen zwölf Balleien in Deutschland (Berlin 1857), 1, p. 274.
10. On this subject see W. Paravicini, 'Die Preussenreise des europäischen Adels', Historische Zeitschrift (1981), 232, Heft 1, pp. 25-38, and F.R.H. Du Boulay, 'Henry of Derby's Expeditions to Prussia 1390-1 and 1392', The Reign of Richard II Essays in Honour of May Mc Kisack, ed. F.R.H. Du Boulay and C.M. Barron (London 1971), pp. 153-173.
11. Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens, ed. M. Perlbach (Halle 1890), p. 149 1,2.
12. R. Ten Haaf, Deutschordensstaat und Deutschordensballeien Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft, ed. Heimpel, Hubatsch, Kaehler and Schramm (2nd ed. Göttingen 1954), 5, p. 36; p. 40. On the bailiwicks see also H.H. Hofmann, Der Staat des Deutschmeisters Studien zur Bayerischen Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte (München 1964), 3.
13. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 6078.
14. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9447.
15. M. Hellmann, 'Bemerkungen zur sozialgeschichtlichen Erforschung des Deutschen Ordens', Historische Jahrbuch (1961), 80, pp. 126-142.
16. E. Maschke, 'Die Inneren Wandlungen', especially pp. 264ff.
17. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10900.
18. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11912.
19. J. Voigt, Geschichte des Deutschen Ritterordens in seinen zwölf Balleien 1, p.
20. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12620.
21. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 6004.
22. J. Voigt, Geschichte des Deutschen Ritterordens in seinen zwölf Balleien 1, p. 268.
23. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 4957.
24. ASP 2, no. 90b, p. 145.
25. Ordensfoliant (OF), 17, p. 285.
26. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10101. The document was edited by K. Murawski in his Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens unter dem

- Hochmeister Konrad von Erlichshausen 1441-1449  
Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft  
 (Göttingen 1953), 10/11, pp. 383;385, 13 is on  
 p. 385.
27. J. Voigt, Geschichte des Deutschen Ritterordens  
in seinen zwölf Balleien 1, p. 273.
  28. O. Schreiber, 'Die Personal-und Amtsdaten der  
 Hochmeister des deutschen Ritterordens von seiner  
 Grundung bis zum Jahre 1525', Oberländische  
Geschichtsblätter (1913), 3, xv, pp. 635-636.
  29. Ibid., p. 637.
  30. Ibid., p. 638.
  31. B. Schmid, 'Die Siegel des Deutschen Ordens in  
 Preussen', Altpreussische Forschungen (1937), 14,  
 p. 187 for an example.
  32. C. Krollmann, 'Heinrich von Plauen', Altpreussische  
Biographie (Königsberg 1941), 2, p. 504.
  33. W. Nöbel, Michael Kuchmeister Quellen und Studien  
zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, ed. K. Wieser  
 (Bad Godesberg 1969), 5, pp. 3-5.
  34. C.A. Lückcrath, Paul von Rusdorf Quellen und Studien  
zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, ed. K. Wieser  
 (Bad Godesberg 1969), 15, pp. 8-9.
  35. K.E. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, pp.  
 22-23.
  36. Ibid., p. 23.
  37. C. Krollmann, 'Heinrich von Plauen', Altpreussische  
Biographie, 2, pp.
  38. W. Nöbel, Michael Kuchmeister, pp. 6-9.
  39. Ibid., pp. 11-15; on one aspect of the work of the  
Königsberger Grossschäfferei see F. Renken, Der  
Handel der Königsberger Grossschäfferei des Deutschen  
Ordens mit Flandern um 1400 Abhandlungen zur Handels-  
und Seegeschichte im Auftrage des Hansischen  
Geschichtsvereins, ed. F. Rörig and W. Vogel (Weimar  
 1937), v, pp. 1-140.
  40. Die Staatsverträge des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen  
im 15. Jahrhundert, ed. E. Weise (Marburg 1970), 1,  
 no. 1, p. 7, 8,9; no. 2, pp. 9-12.
  41. W. Nöbel, Michael Kuchmeister, pp. 15-33.

42. Ibid., pp. 34f; on the problems of the New Mark see K. Heidenreich, Der Deutsche Orden in der Neumark 1402-1455 Einzelschriften der Historischen Kommission für die Provinz Brandenburg und die Reichshauptstadt Berlin (Berlin 1932), 5, especially p. 17.
43. W. Nöbel, Michael Kuchmeister, p. 10.
44. C.A. Lùckerath, Paul von Rusdorf, pp. 8-16.
45. K.E. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, pp. 24-26.
46. E. Maschke, 'Die Inneren Wandlungen', p. 267.
47. Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens, ed. M. Perlback, S 34, p. 54.
48. Ibid., 27, p. 49.
49. F. Milthaler, Die Grossgebietiger des Deutschen Ritterordens bis 1440 Ihre Stellung und Befugnisse Schriften der Albertus Universität Geisteswissenschaftliche Reihe (Königsberg 1940), 26, especially pp. 45f; P.G. Thielen, Die Verwaltung des Ordensstaates Preussen vornehmlich im 15. Jahrhundert Ostmittel-europa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (Köln Graz 1965), 2, pp. 68-84.
50. Milthaler, Die Grossgebietiger, pp. 106-110; Thielen, Die Verwaltung, p. 69.
51. Thielen, Die Verwaltung, pp. 74-76. On this change see also K. Forstreuter, 'Das „Hauptstadtproblem“ des Deutschen Ordens Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands'' (1956), v, pp. 144-145.
52. Milthaler, Die Grossgebietiger, p. 69f; see also S. Ekdahl 'Der Krieg zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und Polen-Litauen im Jahre 1422', Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (1964), 13, p. 631 for the plurality of tactical suggestions in 1422.
53. Milthaler, Die Grossgebietiger, p. 55.
54. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
55. Das Marienburger Tresslerbuch der Jahre 1399-1409 (MTB), ed. E. Joachim (Königsberg 1896), p. 340; p. 391; p. 465; p. 527; p. 539 for purchases of armour and p. 87; p. 123; p. 126; p. 130; p. 165; p. 224; p. 339; p. 345; p. 352; p. 379 for payments to doctors; p. 110; p. 225; p. 232; p. 267; p. 309; p. 349; p. 353; p. 385; p. 400; p. 401 for payments to apothecaries; p. 339; p. 384; p. 419 for payments and purchases for the infirmary.

56. For example 'Item in der yarzal 1406 an der mitwochen noch sente Thomas tage des apostels (22 December), do rechente bruder Conradt von Lichtensteyn groskompthur mit bruder Arnolt von Hecken treszeler' etc. MTB p. 410. See also A. Klein, Die zentrale Finanzverwaltung im Deutschordensstaate Preussen am Anfang des XV. Jahrhunderts Staats- und sozialwissenschaftliche Forschungen ed. G. Schmoller and Max Sering (Leipzig 1904), 23, 2, pp. 44-46. I should like to thank Mr. C. Ferrario for obtaining a copy of Klein's book for me at very short notice.
57. Ibid., especially pp. 84f. for the different functions of the various Kassen. For a shorter account see Thielen, Die Verwaltung, pp. 76-80.
58. Thielen, Die Verwaltung, pp. 80-83. For a less satisfactory account see Milthaler, Die Grossgebietiger pp. 109-110. Milthaler underestimated the extent to which the Grand Masters in the fifteenth century were obliged to take counsel from the Grossgebietiger.
59. ASP 2, no. 153, p. 223; see also pp. 293-294 for a good discussion of the composition of the councils.
60. On the postal service see Thielen, Die Verwaltung, pp. 117-119; 'Geschäftlicher Briefverkehr des Deutschen Ordens' Archiv für Post und Telegraphie (1897), 25, pp. 648-649 by an anonymous author; J. Jahnke and H. Zimmermann, 'Die Postwege des Deutschen Ordens in der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts' Historisch-geographischer Atlas des Preussenlandes, ed. H. and G. Mortensen, and R. Wenskus (Wiesbaden 1968), Lieferung 1, pp. 1-2; P.G. Thielen 'Die Rolle der Uhr im Geistlichen und Administrativen Alltagsleben der Deutschordenskonvente in Preussen' Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes Festschrift E. Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg 1963), pp. 395-396.
61. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3139.
62. Thielen, 'Die Rolle der Uhr', p. 395.
63. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 5130.
64. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11998.
65. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 4985; see also no. 8535. In this letter dated 29 August 1444 the Grand Master wrote to the Marshal concerning the appointment of a new proctor in Rome. The Grosskomtur had already spoken with the candidate they had in mind, but the Marshal had to give his 'advice and opinion' (Rath unde meynunge), too, and nos. 8586 and 8590 for

written discussion concerning the appointment of a commander of Schlochau.

66. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 5462.
67. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8266.
68. Ibid.
69. OF 60 fol. 212v.
70. K.E. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn 8, p. 384.
71. Ibid., c.3, p. 384.
72. Ibid., c.7, p. 384.
73. Ibid., 12, p. 385. On the background to the struggle over the Orseln 'statutes' see A. Seraphim, 'Zur Geschichte und Kritik der angeblichen Statuten des Hochmeisters Werner von Orseln', Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte (1915), 28, pp. 1-82 and especially pp. 74-76 c.1 and 2 for the increased scope given to the German Master in the procedure for the election of a new Grand Master. See also R. Ten Haaf, Deutschordensstaat und Deutschordensballeien, pp. 34-35 and H.H. Hofmann, Der Staat des Deutschmeisters, pp. 89-90.
74. A. Klein, Die zentrale Finanzverwaltung, p. 29.
75. K. Forstreuter, 'Das "Hauptstadtproblem"', p. 145.
76. K. Forstreuter, 'Das "Hauptstadtproblem"', pp. 147-148; for the 'prehistory' of the headquarters see B. Schmid, 'Die Gründung der Marienburg', Altpreussische Forschungen (1929), 6, pp. 191-200.
77. MTB, p. 313; p. 314; p. 505 for examples.
78. Ibid., p. 260; p. 321; p. 339; p. 383.
79. Ibid., p. 269; p. 313; p. 318; pp. 324-325; p, 481; p. 487.
80. Ibid., p. 255.
81. Ibid., p. 482 'Pasternak des meysters fedeler'
82. Ibid., p. 158; p. 160; p. 216; p. 272; p. 313; p. 315; p. 318; p. 402.
83. Ibid., p. 254.
84. Ibid., p. 166.



85. Ibid., p. 483; p. 485; p. 512.
86. Ibid., p. 399.
87. Ibid., pp. 507-508.
88. Ibid., p. 342.
89. Ibid., p. 256; p. 288; p. 307; p. 308; p. 309; p. 383; p. 402.
90. Ibid., p. 310.
91. Ibid., p. 360; p. 509.
92. Ibid., p. 319.
93. Ibid., p. 495.
94. Ibid., p. 486.
95. Ibid., p. 488.
96. Ibid., p. 312. A gold edge was added to a cassock.
97. Ibid., p. 310; p. 337; p. 464; p. 474; p. 494.  
See also GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8999 for deliveries of figs, rice, syrup and cloves.
98. MTB p. 386.
99. Ibid., p. 476 and p. 354 for the cup.
100. Ibid., pp. 163-165.
101. Ibid., p. 490.
102. Ibid., p. 488; see GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9729 for Grand Master Conrad von Erlichshausen's travelling expenses for a journey into Pomerelia in November 1448.
103. Milthaler, Die Grossgebietiger, p. 96, note 349.
104. Ten Haaf, Deutschordensstaat und Deutschordensballeien pp. 26-32.
105. Ibid., pp. 44-45.
106. M. Toeppen, 'Die Zins-Verfassung Preussens unter der Herrschaft des deutschen Ordens', Zeitschrift für Preussische Geschichte und Landeskunde (1867), 4, pp. 760-761.
107. A. Sielmann, 'Die Verwaltung des Haupthauses Marienburg in der Zeit um 1400', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins (1921), 61, p. 90.

108. Ibid., p. 91 note 2.
109. Das Marienburger Konventsbuch der Jahre 1399-1412, ed. W. Zieseimer (Danzig 1913), pp. viii-ix.
110. Das Grosse Zinsbuch des Deutschen Ritterordens, ed. P. G. Thielen (Marburg 1958), p. 3.
111. K.E. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn 2, 4, 5, pp. 383-384.
112. See note 75 above.
113. ASP 1, no. 382, pp. 498-499; see also GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1032 for similar.
114. ASP 2, no. 244, p. 361.
115. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, p. 62.
116. GSA OF 60. Since the edition by Ernst Hennig (Königsberg 1806), is unobtainable and apparently unreliable, all references here are to the original a hand-copy of which is in my possession.
117. GSA OF 60 fol. 28v.
118. Ibid., fols. 198v.-200v.
119. Ibid., fols. 202v.-204v.
120. Ibid., fols. 206v.-207v.
121. ASP 2, no. 253, p. 378.
122. Ibid., p. 383.
123. Ibid., p. 385.
124. Ibid., p. 386. From the report on the Diet held in Gerdaun in August 1422 it is clear that when the Grand Master met the Estates alone, he had to refer back to his officers for counsel before he could make any final decision. See ASP 1, no. 287, p. 362, 4.
125. Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens Rule 1, p. 29.
126. Ibid., pp. 24-25 and Rule 1, p. 29.
127. Ibid., Prologue 4, pp. 25-26.
128. Ibid., Law 29, p. 75.
129. Ibid., Rule 11, pp. 38-39.

130. Ibid., p. 39.
131. Ibid., Rule 12, p. 40.
132. Ibid., Rule 13, pp. 40-42.
133. Ibid., Rule 17, p. 44.
134. Ibid., Rule 22, p. 46.
135. Ibid., Rule 28, p. 50.
136. Ibid., Rules 19, 20, p. 45.
137. B. Schumacher, 'Die Idee der Geistlichen Ritterorden im Mittelalter', reprinted in Heidenmission und Kreuzzugsgedanke in der Deutschen Ostpolitik des Mittelalters, ed. H. Beumann Wege der Forschung 7 (Darmstadt 1973), p. 376 where Schumacher speaks of the 'ungemütliche Kampfesart der Ordensritter'.
138. Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens, ed. Perlbach, Law 28, p. 74.
139. For example, R. Wenskus, 'Das Ordensland Preussen', p. 370 and p. 372 draws our attention to this 'starke Schriftlichkeit'.
140. Thielen, Die Verwaltung, pp. 27-28 for a complete list. See also G. Mortensen, 'Verwaltung des Ordenslandes Preussen um 1400' Historisch-geographischer Atlas des Preussenlandes Lieferung 1 and the maps and M. Toeppen Historisch-comparative Geographie von Preussen (Gotha 1858), pp. 51-234 for the administrative geography of each commandery.
141. For a brief account see C. Wunsch, 'Die Burgen des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen', Historisch-geographischer Atlas des Preussenlandes with some useful photographs and groundplans of various houses of the Order.
142. For a good discussion of this subject as it affected another 'frontier' society see R.R. Davies, Lordship and Society in the March of Wales 1282-1400 (Oxford 1978), especially pp. 67-86.
143. J. Voigt, Geschichte des Deutschen Ritterordens in seinen zwölf Balleien 1, p. 295.
144. Ibid., pp. 297-299.
145. A. Klein, Die zentrale Finanzverwaltung, p. 30; Thielen, Die Verwaltung, p. 13f; Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens, ed. Perlbach, Custom 7a, p. 97.

146. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 4204.
147. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 4483.
148. A. Klein, Die zentrale Finanzverwaltung, especially p. 34f.
149. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 6725. For the way in which these taxes were allocated see ASP 1, pp. 23-25.
150. ASP 1, no. 456, pp. 599-600.
151. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12058.
152. Das Grosse Ämterbuch des Deutschen Ordens, ed. W. Zieseimer (Wiesbaden 1969 reprint of 1921 edition), pp. 107-108.
153. Ibid., pp. 103-104.
154. Ibid., pp. 92-94 for the contents of the church.
155. Ibid., p. 92.
156. Ibid., pp. 94-95.
157. M. Töppen, 'Topographisch-statistische Mittheilungen über die Domänen-Vorwerke des deutschen Ordens in Preussen', Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1870), 7, p. 415.
158. Ibid., p. 431.
159. Das Grosse Ämterbuch, p. 87.
160. Toppen, 'Topographisch-statistische Mittheilungen', p. 432.
161. Das Grosse Ämterbuch, p. 89; Töppen 'Topographisch-statistische Mittheilungen', p. 432.
162. Das Grosse Ämterbuch, p. 98.
163. Ibid., p. 83.
164. GSA OF 200b I, fol. 366.
165. Ibid., fol. 366.
166. Ibid., fol. 367.
167. M. Toeppen, Historisch-comparative Geographie, pp. 189-190. See also G.A. von Mülverstedt, 'Die Beamten und Konventsmitglieder in den Verwaltungsbezirken des Deutschen Ordens innerhalb des

- Oberländischen Kreises', Oberländische Geschichtsblätter (1900), 2, p. 22f. for chronological lists of the officers.
168. Das Grosse Ämterbuch, pp. 96-101 for the various offices in each of these houses. For the Ortelsburg ironworks at Hammer-Rudau see GSA OF 166n fol. 123r. and also M. Töppen, Geschichte Masurens (Aalen reprint 1979 of Danzig 1870 edition), pp. 141-142.
169. Ibid., pp. 146-147; for the full lists see SRP 4, p. 112.
170. Das Grosse Ämterbuch, p. 109.
171. Ibid., p. 119.
172. Ibid., p. 99.
173. GSA OF 166n fol. 199r etc. See also Toeppen, Geschichte Masurens, p. 143. For the example of the judicial activity of the Pfleger in Ortelsburg see F. Gause, 'Organisation und Kompetenz der Landgerichte des Ordenslandes Preussen', Alt-preussische Monatsschrift (1922), 59, p. 238.
174. Das Grosse Amterbuch, p. 87.
175. Ibid., p. 95; p. 98; p. 106.
176. Toeppen, Geschichte Masurens, p. 141. See also GSA OF 166n fol. 123r for the rent.
177. GSA OF 200b I, fols. 82-84.
178. Ibid., fol. 83.
179. Ibid., fol. 85.
180. Ibid., fol. 87.
181. Ibid., fol. 89.
182. A. Semrau, 'Der Wirtschaftsplan des Ordenshauses Elbing aus dem Jahre 1386', Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn (1937), 45, pp. 1-74. The texts are contained in GSA OF 166m which I would classify as a random collection of rent rolls, administrative articles - including the von Rusdorf articles of 1428 - and odd reminders for the commander's benefit - such as that to pay a pension to former Grand Master Heinrich von Plauen rather than anything so progressive as a 'Wirtschaftsplan'.

183. Ibid., p. 46.
184. Ibid., p. 48.
185. Ibid., pp. 49-50.
186. Ibid., p. 50.
187. Das Grosse Ämterbuch, pp. 426-465; see also A. Semrau, 'Das Ordenshaus Thorn, Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn (1939), 47, pp. 53-85.
188. Das Grosse Amterbuch, pp. 1-45.
189. Ibid., pp. 257-296.
190. Ibid., pp. 47-48.
191. Ibid., p. 47.
192. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
193. For example GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 5103.
194. Das Grosse Zinsbuch, p. 108. See also ASP 1, p. 23 for Schlochan's status as a 'Mittelhaus'.
195. Das Grosse Zinsbuch, p. 63.
196. Ibid., p. 113.
197. Ibid., p. 56.
198. Ibid., p. 48.
199. Ibid., p. 120.
200. Ibid., pp. 110-111.
201. Thielen, Die Verwaltung, pp. 89-90.
202. G. von Buchwald; 'Die Wachstafeln der Grossen Königlichen Bibliothek zu Kopenhagen', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsverein (1881), 4, pp. 1-33; A. Bertling 'Erläuterungen und Ergebnisse der Kopenhagener Wachstafeln', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsverein (1881), 4, pp. 34-82; 'Die Wachstafeln der Danziger Stadtbibliothek' Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsverein (1884), 11, pp. 1-61. For the relationship of commanders of the Order to the Landgerichte see F. Gause 'Organisation und Kompetenz der Landgerichte des Ordenslandes Preussen' Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1922), 59, especially pp. 239-242.

203. Bertling, 'Erläuterungen', p. 43.
204. Buchwald, 'Die Wachstafeln der Grossen Königlichen Bibliothek', p. 7.
205. Bertling, 'Die Wachstafeln der Danziger Stadtbibliothek', p. 5.
206. Buchwald, 'Die Wachstafeln der Grossen Königlichen Bibliothek', p. 29.
207. Bertling, 'Die Wachstafeln der Danziger Stadtbibliothek', p. 25.
208. Ibid., p. 20.
209. Ibid., p. 20.
210. Ibid., p. 25.
211. Buchwald, 'Die Wachstafeln der Grossen Königlichen Bibliothek', p. 15.
212. Bertling, 'Die Wachstafeln der Danziger Stadtbibliothek', p. 21.
213. Bertling, 'Erläuterungen und Ergebnisse', pp. 57-59.
214. Bertling, 'Die Wachstafeln der Danziger Stadtbibliothek', p. 23.
215. For this concept see W. Abel, Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft vom frühen Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert Deutsche Agrargeschichte II, (Stuttgart 1967 2nd ed.), p. 140.
216. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9312 for an example of this procedure.
217. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9457.
218. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9626. Wickerau was a village 5 km. west of Elbing. For the only religious house in Elbing see M. Töppen, Elbinger Antiquitäten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des städtischen Lebens im Mittelalter (Marienwerder 1871), 2, pp. 130-136.
219. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9457.
220. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9628.
221. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9627.
222. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9629.

223. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12361.
224. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 13026.



CHAPTER THREE

THE MAKING OF A TYRANNY

CHAPTER THREETHE MAKING OF A TYRANNY

The four wars, of 1410, 1414, 1422 and 1433-31, waged against Poland, deeply damaged the Order by reducing its income and, partly as a consequence, injuring its relationships with Prussian society. The destruction caused by war, and <sup>the</sup> Order's incompetence at certain moments, resulted in a desire for peace, and this peace ironically enough was achieved only through civil war itself. The present chapter begins by considering these developments as they are evidenced by chronicles, letters and account books.

Secondly, some of the longer-term tensions between rulers and ruled will be examined, for a war-weary populace and a landscape filled with deserted Hufen does not entirely account for the widespread alienation of Prussian society from the government of the Order that took place in the fifteenth century. Rather was it the increased fiscal demands and the severer insistence upon its rights, occasioned by the losses of war, that sharpened Prussian hostility to the Order's regime. The sequel was rebellion against a great institution once deemed a charitable work of the German nobility. To its subjects it was morally bankrupt, and they showed their longing for a local regime loosely supervised from Poland.

PART I: War, Defeat and the Post-Tannenberg Agrarian  
Crisis

1. Some contrasts of fortune

On 25 July 1402 Stibor von Stiborzicz, the plenipotentiary of the penurious King Sigismund of Hungary pawned the New Mark - the easternmost part of the margraviate of Brandenburg - to the German Order for 63,000 Hungarian Gulden, with the possibility of repurchase during the lifetimes of the King and his brothers Wenzel and Jost.<sup>1</sup> In the contract drawn up at Pressburg on 28 September, the Order formally acquired

the New Mark across the Oder with all vassals, towns, fortresses, villages, liberties, uses, services, rents, taxes and profits of justice, with all rivers, lakes and all other waters, fisheries, fields etc. ... with full lordship and ownership, as we have had the selfsame New Mark, within its old frontiers and with all its appurtenances, in hereditary ownership, with nothing excepted<sub>2</sub>

In this way, Sigismund got his credit, while the Order could look forward to the enjoyment of the profits of the New Mark and in the longer term the return of both its initial outlay and any subsequent capital investments that it might make during its possession of the territory.<sup>3</sup>

Despite these apparently generous terms and notwithstanding the speed with which the money was paid over to the King, the Order had had to be elbowed into the transaction. Although since 1384 with the acquisition of the town and land around Schivelbein from the von Wedel

family the Order had been quietly establishing a presence in this strategically crucial territory, successive Grand Masters had turned down offers of the whole New Mark in 1392, 1395 and again early in 1402, largely because they were sceptical about its alleged value and decidedly suspicious of the powers and independence of the towns and nobility of the New Mark.<sup>4</sup> The Order was forced into the transaction when Stibor let it be known that he had negotiated with the Poles, a move which threatened to sever the Order's lines of communication with the German heartlands.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the circumstances surrounding the transaction (which was not unique since in 1399 analogous credit facilities were extended to Samovit of Masovia concerning the land of Wizna and Albrecht of Sweden and John the Younger of Mecklenburg concerning Gotland), it reflects the extent to which the Order was capable of employing its wealth in the profitable realisation of its political and strategic ambitions.<sup>6</sup>

Nine years later, the Order's financial strength was severely tested by the terms imposed by Wladislaw of Poland and Alexander-alias Witold-Grand Duke of Lithuania after their victory at Tannenberg. On 1 February 1411 a treaty was concluded at Thorn and a supplementary agreement obliged Grand Master von Plauen to pay Wladislaw 100,000 Schock Bohemian Groschen in return for the release of prisoners - above all the dukes of Ols and Stettin - and the clearance of fortresses still under Polish occupation.<sup>7</sup> The money was to be paid within one year

and the first two instalments were to be handed over on 8 March and 24 June. The author of the document acknowledging the debt foresaw the trouble to come. Von Plauen accepted the terms negotiated by his plenipotentiaries 'although he knew very well that the raising of such inordinate sums would be very difficult for him'.<sup>8</sup> In a letter dated 3 December 1412 von Plauen told Peter von Wormditt, the Order's proctor in Rome, that 'although the land is very much weakened on account of the devastation and in particular through two great taxes ... (we), must pay out the abovementioned sums of money or hand over the New Mark to the Poles, which would perhaps be to our Order's eternal ruin'.<sup>9</sup> Silver crosses, monstrances and other vessels had to be melted down in the drive to raise money.

There was a further reason to raise the money with all possible alacrity. The Order was rich and one of the ways it used its money was to hire mercenaries. As Kutowski has shown, from the 1380s the Order entered into agreements for the supply of soldiers with the penniless dukes of Pomerania.<sup>10</sup> Following the disaster at Tannenberg, in which over 200 members of the Order lost their lives, the Order was heavily dependent upon mercenaries. According to Kutowski, there were possibly as many as 7,500 mercenaries in Prussia by mid-December 1410.<sup>11</sup> Despite their participation in the defence of Marienburg and the attack on Krone, their enthusiasm for the job waxed and waned according to whether they

were paid or not. In August 1409 the commander of Tuchel informed the Grand Master that the mercenaries there were disobedient, ineffectual thieves.<sup>12</sup> On 19 January 1411 the commander in Schonsee reported that his mercenaries were unwilling to move and that therefore his villages and mills were unprotected. He added that

when ten of them are able, there are  
at least one hundred of them who are  
useless<sup>13</sup>

Some of them were refusing to fight unless their costs and losses were paid for. The anonymous Continuator of the chronicle of Johann von Posilge pointed the finger at the Silesians whom he said 'would not bite the foxes', in other words they let others do their fighting for them.<sup>14</sup> A striking example of mercenary cowardice occurred in the Thirteen Years War. On 11 February 1454 the commander in Thorn reported that he and his men had been under bombardment day and night and that the men were falling down with sleepiness. He added that 'some of the mercenaries which your Grace has sent us jumped over the walls, others crept into corners (eyns teils vorkrochen sich zcu winkel).<sup>15</sup> Occasionally we learn something of the thieving exploits of the mercenaries. On 7 April 1411 the Danzig councillors wrote to their colleagues in Thorn concerning a force of one hundred and fifty mercenaries, some of whom had taken a small ship on the Vistula in order to practice piracy along the Baltic coast.<sup>16</sup> They were also costly in terms of food

and fodder. In 1412 the Grand Master wrote to the Master of Livonia telling him that the mercenaries and their steeds had devoured virtually all of the meat and fodder in Marienburg. Provisions were so depleted that the Chapter had had to send its horses to graze in the woods.<sup>17</sup>

If the mercenaries were not paid they could seek out their compensation in the villages. We know from sources from the Thirteen Years War that a visit from a party of mercenaries could be a terrible experience for a village. For example, on 4 December 1454 bishop Caspar of Pomesania informed the Grand Master of the depredations of mercenaries in the village of Crebisee. They arrived on a Sunday night 'speaking Czech', breaking into the houses and making off with all manner of goods.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, there was a political aspect to the pay problem. If the mercenaries were not paid they could resort to feuding or, worse, seek the intervention of their lords in the Reich against the Order.<sup>19</sup> This point was not lost upon the King of Poland. While he kept the important prisoners taken at Tannenberg for their ransom value, the small fry were turned loose to bedevil the Order with their pay claims.<sup>20</sup>

## 2. The Disasters of War 1410-1414

The war of 1410 saw extensive burning and looting

in both Prussia and Poland. The anonymous Continuator of the chronicle of Johann von Posilge describes the actions of the invading Polish army around Gilgenburg in July 1410.

They conquered the town and burnt it down and they slew the young and the old and they and their heathen allies committed unspeakable murders. And they besmirched the churches and cut off the breasts of young girls and women and horribly tortured them and let them be led away into servitude (und czu eyginschaft weg lyssin trybin). They also did many shameful things to the sacraments; whatever they came across in the churches, they tore to pieces with their hands and trod it underfoot, and they did it in jest.<sup>21</sup>

In the course of their stay the allied army managed much in the way of looting of livestock and property. The Continuator reported that stallions, cows and all types of property were daily removed to Poland, Lithuania and Russia.<sup>22</sup> The peasants were short of money and seedcorn and the mice ate what had been sown.<sup>23</sup> Sometimes the invaders contented themselves with destruction alone. On 23 October 1410 the Master of Fish in Balga, acting as commander in Osterode, reported that an enemy force had burnt the villages and mills around Neidenburg and were expected to return the next day.<sup>24</sup> The invaders were also children of their time. In December 1410 the commander of Graudenz said that one hundred and twenty enemy horsemen had descended upon Rheden 'and they are forcing the folk to do labour services and they destroy the churches and take what they find'.<sup>25</sup>



Although the Order's detailed records of the destruction of 1411-1419 (the Schadenbücher), went missing in Königsberg in 1945, we have C. Krollmann's abstract of their contents. The following Table gives the total costs of the devastation for both the commanderies of the Order and the Prussian bishoprics.<sup>26</sup>

<u>Commandery/bishopric(*)</u>	<u>Cost of war damage</u>
Rehden	1135m
Schönsee	1041m
Gollub	9149m
Birgelau	Extensive damage
Strassburg	28,992m
Thorn	2375m
Leipe	400m
Roggenhausen	4 churches burnt
Graudenz	church robbed
Culm*	9233m
Bratean	5755m
Marienburg	16,500m
Pomesania*	90,480m
Christburg	74,280m
Elbing	24,562m
Osterode	150,805½m
Ermland*	552,953m
Balga	27,595m
Brandenburg	21,230m
Memel	buildings damaged
Ragnit	1164m and sheds and brick-kilns destroyed
<u>Total cost</u>	<u>1,052,156½m</u>

The principal losers were the country priests. Again and again the records say that the enemy had stolen the vestments and vessels and had set fire to the wooden churches. At Swecz they took a breviary, bell and chalice;<sup>27</sup> at Kawke they took two bells and smashed the glass windows.<sup>28</sup> The heathen Lithuanians and Tartars were invariably accused of treading Holy vessels underfoot, spilling the holy water or washing their clothing in the font.<sup>29</sup> Their Polish allies made off with silver-gilt monstrances, wood-carvings and service books.<sup>30</sup> From Strassburg they took livestock, grain, crossbows and arrows and managed to take the locks and bolts off the windows and doors.<sup>31</sup> A considerable number of priests were slain amidst the spilt baptismal waters and the melting bells. The priest at Grosse Czende was murdered in his church and three of his colleagues in the commandery of Osterode met the same fate.<sup>32</sup> At Selesny the village school children were wiped out.<sup>33</sup> The women of Sinthen were raped in church and three of their men were murdered.<sup>34</sup> The priest and seven peasants were killed in Canditten and the Prior of Potollen was despatched while the enemy hacked a picture from the high altar.<sup>35</sup> In Thorn houses with values ranging from 6m to three houses collectively worth 1000m were destroyed.<sup>36</sup>

Occasionally the sources give us a glimpse of the miseries of human displacement. For example, on 3 November 1410 the commander of Osterode asked for 100m 'since I have all your worthy people with me who have

been ravaged ... and I must feed their horses oats and hay the same as my own horses'.<sup>37</sup> Sometime in the same year a man calling himself J.W wrote to his sister Margreth who, having lost all in the war, was staying in Danzig in the house of Conrad Leczkaw. J.W. expressed his concern about her and asked her to send her three sons to him for safe-keeping. He wished both Wladislaw and Poland 'a bad year'.<sup>38</sup>

The cost to the Order of his dislocation of the agrarian economy can be seen to good effect in its surviving account books. The Marienburger Konvèntsbuch records the income and expenditure of the Marienburg Chapter between 1398 and 1412. By far the most significant component in the Chapter's income was the rents from the villages. As we have seen in an earlier Chapter, the commandery included areas of high fertility, favourable market and transport conditions conducive to peasant prosperity. The latter is reflected in the regularity with which the rents were paid. In the following Table, the Chapter's total annual income between 1397 and 1412 appears on the left and the sums derived from rents alone on the right.

It is clear that whereas from 1397-1410 the Chapter's income exhibits a remarkable stability, in the two post-war years there was a sharp drop to roughly a quarter in 1411 and to half in 1412 of the normal annual receipts.<sup>39</sup> The Continuator tells us that while the King of Poland was besieging Marienburg his Tartar

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total income</u>	<u>Income from rent</u>
1397		7798m 9sc.
1398	8409½m 1sc. 5d.	7838m 9sc.
1399	8424½m 1sc. 20d.	8029m 15sc.
1400	8584½m minus 5d.	" "
1401	8766½m 9½sc. 4d.	" "
1402	8689m 3sc. 4d.	" "
1403	8416m 21sc. minus 4d.	" "
1404	8272½m 7sc. 10d.	8021½m 7sc.
1405	8361m 6sc. 5d.	" "
1406	8600m 2½sc. 4d.	" "
1407	8383m 10½sc.	" "
1408	8267m 8½sc.	" "
1409	8155m 8sc. 8d.	" "
1410	8176m 19sc.	8008m 7½sc.
1411	2033m 14sc.	
1412	4336m 3sc. 21d.	

and Lithuanian allies crossed the Nogat in the vicinity of the Order's demesne at Lesewitz and filled their wagons with fodder for their horses.<sup>40</sup> These foraging expeditions left their mark in the Chapter's records. In 1411 grain had to be purchased from much further afield than was usual. Money was sent to the commanders in Strassburg, Schonsee, Königsberg, Graudenz, Elbing, Mewe and Marienwerder to pay for grain.<sup>41</sup> Pauwel, the Grand Master's servant was sent to far away Ragnit with 20m to purchase 500 bushels of oats: Petresch, another servant was sent to Balga with 43m to buy 1,000 bushels of oats.<sup>42</sup> In 1411 a total of 1,455m was spent on grain from other commanderies.<sup>43</sup>

The destruction of both the crops and the

seedcorn of the Werder farmers is evident from the account of the purchases made at Dirsau.

He (Glybicz), has bought us 196 bushels of barley at 6 shillings, which was given to the people of Gnojau as seed, and the 365 bushels of oats at 3 shillings, which was given to the villages of Niedau, Barwald and Reichenau.<sup>44</sup>

In 1411 none of the villages of the Grosse Werder paid rent, probably on account of war damage.

In the case of other villages, the peasants were clearly having difficulties in meeting their obligations. For example the peasants of Woczlaw on the Stublausche Werder paid 58m 2sc. rent, but they owed just over 27m 'from 16 Hufen which have been burnt and from 7 Morgen excess'.<sup>45</sup>

In 1412 the peasants of the Werder villages paid rent again but significantly less than they had paid in 1409, In the following table, the 1409 rents from twelve Werder villages are given on the left and the 1412 rents appear on the right.<sup>46</sup>

<u>Village</u>	<u>1409 rent</u>	<u>1412 rent</u>
Wernersdorf	53m	22½m 20sc. 20d.
Montau	75m 2d.	21m 2sc.
Mierau	53m 3f.	15½m 5sc. 8d.
Czans	58m 8sc.	30m 3f.
Prangow	40½m	37m 3sc. 8d.
Fürstenwerder	81m	76½m
Broske	122½m 3sc.	109m 7sc.
Orloff	69m	40½m 2sc.
Schadewalt	74m 4sc.	16m 1f.
Nuwemonsterberg	73m ½f.	39m 1 lot.
Nuwentych	37m 10sc.	10½m
Wiedau	40m	3m 1f.

Furthermore, the rents were no longer paid in lump sums but, as the Chapter's accounts make clear, they arrived spasmodically or as agricultural produce instead of cash.<sup>47</sup> Concessions had to be made to the impoverished peasants. For example, the village of Wernersdorf, in which 4 Hufen and 1 inn were deserted, paid only half its rent. Significantly, the Chapter's accounts contained the remark 'concerning the other half of the rent, one shall not admonish them since our Grand Master and the Great Commander have commuted it'.<sup>48</sup>

Further evidence that the peasantry were finding it difficult to make ends meet comes from the commandery of Brandenburg. On 6 December 1410, the commander told the Grand Master that the peasants had refused to pay their reduced rents to the House Commander and that in consequence the commandery was short of both money and provisions.<sup>49</sup>

### 3. Crop failure and plague

In addition to the disasters of war, Prussia was afflicted with a succession of harvest failures in the years following Tannenberg. In 1412 there was a dearth of all sorts of grain (probably caused by torrential rain), and consequent price inflation.<sup>50</sup> In a letter dated 31 December 1412 the Grand Master informed the Master of Livonia that the peasants of the Culmerland had not paid their grain dues and asked him to ship 40 Last of grain to Ragnit. The price of corn had reached

a prohibitively high level in Prussia and there was no grain arriving from Poland.<sup>51</sup>

There was a severe drought in the Spring of 1415 and the seed was 'mostly ruined'.<sup>52</sup> In the following year, the Continuator tells us, 'many people lived off the shoots of the trees' (der knospin von den boumen), and very little grain of any description grew'.<sup>53</sup> People had to resort to barley bread. The following Table, drawn up by Prof. Carsten, shows the effects of the 1416 dearth upon the price of a Last of rye.<sup>54</sup>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Rye price in shillings</u>	<u>Price adjusted to account for debasement of the coinage</u>
1407	240	240
1408	390	369
1409	379	358
1410	362	342
1411	302	163
1412	490	264
1413		
1414	345	115
1415	900	300
1416	2,620	870
1417	353	258

The year of dearth was also a year of plague.

the plague broke out in Danzig and spread over the entire land of Pomerelia, then it spread as wide as the land itself was, into towns and villages, in the hinterland and into the Wilderness, and it was so extensive that no one was safe ... Eighty six brothers of the Order died this year.<sup>55</sup>

1412 was also a bad year for the horses of Prussia. On 30 April the Marshal wrote to the Grand Master concerning the cutting of timber in the Niederland for the building work at Tilsit and Ragnit. The Marshal wanted the labour services spread to the commandery of Elbing and added that 'one land should not alone be burdened and ruined with labour services while the others stay so idle (mussig), and free. Folk are complaining loudly and everywhere that they have sick horses.<sup>56</sup>

4. The Tannenberg crisis, the Order bailiwicks and the late medieval agrarian depression

The post Tannenberg crisis also disturbed relations between the Grand Master and the twelve bailiwicks in the Reich. As H.H. Hofmann has said, the Grand Master could no longer waive revenues or lend money to help restore the fortunes of the bailiwicks which were hit by the agricultural depression, and the depredations of feuding or greedy neighbours.<sup>57</sup> The Grand Master had to ask the officers in the bailiwicks for 30,000 Gulden to maintain the territorial integrity of the ravaged Prussian state.<sup>58</sup> The response was universally negative. In a letter dated 11 November 1411 the Landkomtur of Lorraine wrote

May your Grace know that I was present, on account of an order from the Master in Germany, with other officers who were with him, at the Chapter at Frankfurt.



and I heard there some letters which your Grace wrote to our Master before the Chapter and also the demands which your Grace made through the commander of Ottringen, in which I have noted your Grace's great troubles and concern for future loss and war. And we are all generally oppressed with heavy sorrows and concerns, and on account of this I and the other officers in the general Chapter were exhorted by the Master of the German lands to help your Grace and the land of Prussia in your sorrows and straits and to help with some money. I was entirely willing and ready to help as far as possible, but the Lord God knows that the bailiwick of Lorraine cannot do that and at this time has no money that can be sent out. Almost all our Order houses, estates and the poor people in the land of Lorraine, on account of the great war that has been going on for so long between my lords the duke of Lorraine and the count of Nassau, the count of Mosse, the count of Salmen and the lord of Bolchen, are so wasted, ravaged, scattered and grossly ruined that we cry out to God and your Grace. Also, what the aforementioned bailiwick has in money or ecclesiastical vessels or from other issues is too little. Moreover, it was all given through the will of God and in honour of Our Lady and also those who gave it will never permit us to sell or alienate any of it, since they and their forefathers are remembered by it and divine service is increased by it ... Also the aforementioned bailiwick is in debt for 1800 Gulden, excepting the money that is sent over the mountains and for the next journey to Prussia. I beg your Grace that through the will of God you will not be angry with me. 59

A similar picture of despondency was painted by the other commanders in the bailiwicks. On 11 November 1411 Albrecht von Wiczeleiben Landkomtur in Thuringia wrote to the Grand Master that there was trouble with the local tyrant the lord of Varila. Most of the houses of the Order were served by priests ' and are also subject

to the lords' and therefore the room for the alienation of properties was restricted. There had been bad harvests (gros miszewachs), for five consecutive years. The bailiwick had 118 brothers 'most of whom are priests and therefore on account of the parishes one cannot reduce their numbers and one cannot supply the same brothers with the necessities that they should have on account of the debts and bad harvests'.<sup>60</sup> The Landkomtur Wetche Pychow from Saxony grimly rehearsed the fires and banditry that had destroyed the books and vestments in two of his houses. There was nothing to sell because the lords of the land would not permit it.<sup>61</sup> On 8 September 1411 the Austrian officers wrote concerning their problems. The story was a familiar one. The properties of the bailiwick were tied up as pious foundations and the founders would not permit their endowments to be alienated.<sup>62</sup> In December 1411 the German Master wrote to von Plauen explaining that his provincial commanders were enmeshed 'in debt and more debt' with interest payments outstripping receipts.<sup>63</sup> The property of the bailiwick of Westphalia was worth less than 500 Gulden a year because everything was devastated and the land was 'never without war'.<sup>64</sup> On 29 May 1412 the Landkomtur in Bohemia wrote to the Grand Master turning down a request for money. The King of Bohemia had recently taxed the clergy (including the priests of the Order), and 'he has taken all of their rents, ours as well as the others'. There was discontent amongst the brethren.

Some brothers say that before they allow themselves to be taxed they will sooner join another Order and concerning this I have had to go slowly and carefully with them.<sup>65</sup>

Obligations were being neglected. For example, early in December 1412 von Plauen wrote to Eberhart Keczelsdorfer Landkomtur in Bozen expressing his astonishment that the bailiwick had not paid its rent of 300 Gulden to the proctor in Rome.<sup>66</sup>

The financial troubles in the bailiwicks were an aspect of what Wilhelm Abel has termed the late medieval agrarian depression. A slowing down of the rate of population growth; years of high grain prices followed by steep descents; a rise in the value of real wages; contraction of the area under cultivation, and a collapse of seigneurial income.<sup>67</sup> Although this is not the place to discuss the economic history of the bailiwicks in any detail, one matter is clear. The German Order was a prisoner of the circumstances of its creation and enrichment. The recipient of two centuries of noble largesse, the Order was bound to honour the wishes of its benefactors both living and dead. Even had there been buyers - which was unlikely in a general agricultural crisis - the Order could not alienate property at will. In any case, the Order's own territorial expansionist ethos worked against the breaking up of property. The tentacles of the German nobility were firmly locked upon the Order's wealth.

Writing to Marshal Michael Kuchmeister in

Hungary on 4 September 1412, von Plauen summed up this fruitless search for assistance

We sent the House commander from Thorn to Germany. He has come back with the answer that we can expect no solace from them and that no help is envisaged. Therefore we ask you to speak with the officers from Germany, some of whom are with you so that they will urgently make it known to the officers that they must help since we simply have no resources. This year the winter grain was so ruined that the land can hardly be provided for and we are thinking it will be necessary for us to provide the land with help if we are able to

Von Plauen felt that he was under an impossible strain, or, as he graphically put it, he had 'so vil uff den hals'.<sup>68</sup>

## 5. Taxation

The war of 1410 not only caused widespread devastation in Prussia: it also bankrupted the Order. As we have seen, there were problems with the supply of grain, one of the major export commodities. Furthermore, the Order had been too lavish with its extensions of credit to needy rulers. In consequence the currency suffered debasement. The Prussian Mark lost two thirds of its value: three Marks to the English Noble instead of one to one.<sup>69</sup>

In order to raise the money to pay off the indemnity which the Poles wisely insisted upon being paid in Bohemian currency, Heinrich von Plauen took the momentous decision to raise a general tax. On 22

February 1411 he summoned the representatives of the Estates to a Diet at Osterode to discuss the projected tax. The representatives of the towns and country of Prussia were prepared to pay a property tax of 1/90th of a Mark.<sup>70</sup>

They also presented twenty-six articles of complaint against the government of the Order. They were particularly concerned with trade and commercial issues. The Order could no longer expect preferential treatment for its servants who were engaged in trade. When grain export embargoes were in force, the officials of the Order were not to sell licenses of exemption. Debts left unpaid by transferred or deceased Order members were to be paid from their remaining property. The property was not to vanish under the cloak of corporate ownership. Officers were not to trade their grain outside the markets. The citizens were to be free to purchase their wood, wool and grain wherever they wanted to. There was to be an end to the enforced abuse of the seigneurial milling monopoly and the Order was asked to stop its encroachments upon the liberties and economies of the towns through the establishment of craftsmen, inns and officials in their immediate vicinity. Finally, the Order was not to interfere in the election of urban officials, whether it be the mayor or the schoolmaster.<sup>71</sup> In return for the Grand Master's assent to the articles - excepting the one concerning the mill monopoly - the Estates granted a tax of 1/60th of a Mark.

Both Thorn and Danzig, two of the richest towns in Prussia, refused to pay the tax. They had achieved a large degree of economic and political autonomy by transferring their allegiances to Wladislaw early in August 1410.<sup>72</sup> In the privilege dated 5 August the King granted the town half of the revenue from the Order's Great Mill, lordship over several villages and fishing rights on a two mile stretch of coast to the east of the town.<sup>73</sup> On 10 August the towns of Thorn, Elbing, Braunsberg and Danzig received further privileges from the King. They were granted the right to coin, to place the export of grain under embargo, the right of presentation to their churches and freedom to travel with their merchandise into Poland-Lithuania.<sup>74</sup>

Following Danzig's return to the Order fold in October, von Plauen - still surprisingly regarded as a 'political genius' by Dr. Weise - chose to ignore this recent history by using tough economic sanctions to make Danzig pay the tax.<sup>75</sup> A chain was raised across the Mottlau and the staple was moved to Elbing.<sup>76</sup> As we shall see, the Grand Master's brother, the commander in Danzig, also took it upon himself to eliminate some of the leading members of the Danziger patriciate.

## 6. The Eye of the Storm: the deposition of Grand Master von Plauen

The characters of Heinrich von Plauen and his successor Michael Kuchmeister have been examined by

scholars and writers of propaganda for several centuries. For historians of a nationalistic disposition, von Plauen represents the man of destiny, will and purpose, the determined foe of the urban oligarchs. A tragic figure misunderstood by his contemporaries and, for von Treitschke - whose melodramatic essay has left its mark on the historiography of the German Order down to this day - a figure to be compared with the dismissed Bismarck.<sup>77</sup> Kùchmeister, on the other hand, is condemned for his appeasement of the Poles, his belief in the efficacy of diplomacy and his willingness to surrender territory. Christian Krollmann's article 'Die Politik des Hochmeisters Heinrich von Plauen gegen die Grossen Städte' (1910), is a revealing example of this form of projection of the political idioms and national phobias of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century into the remote past. Erich Maschke's chapter on von Plauen in his Der deutsche Ordensstaat is an extreme statement of the misplaced genius theme.<sup>78</sup>

The dispute between the Grand Master and his Marshal had its origins in the costly and ineffective round of talks that took place in Budapest in 1412. To von Plauen's annoyance, the Order delegation under Kùchmeister managed to spend 10,000 Gulden between May and November.<sup>79</sup> The results were not commensurate with an investment on this scale. This was not surprising since both Sigismund and Wladislaw were interested in the Order's money and territory rather than the preservation of its Baltic states. While the former exploited

the Order's fear of a coalition between himself and Poland-Lithuania to swindle large sums of money from the penurious corporation, the latter quietly worked at the acquisition of the New Mark.<sup>80</sup> Isolated and ailing in Marienburg, von Plauen decided upon an attack against Poland. This took place in October 1413 under the command of Marshal Kűchmeister. The moment was well chosen; Wladislaw and Witold were celebrating their alliance in Horodlo on the Bug since there was a plague in Poland. But what was the attack supposed to accomplish? A raid through northern Poland would soon splutter out on the limitless rolling spaces of Poland-Lithuania. A few days later, following the mutiny of the contingents from the towns and countryside, the Marshal gave the order to turn homewards where von Plauen was deposed.<sup>81</sup>

The Continuator of Johann von Posilge's chronicle included the charges made against von Plauen in his account of the deposition. The principal charge is likely to be familiar to all students of the political idioms of the Middle Ages. Von Plauen had ignored those who considered themselves by virtue of their station in society as well as on account of the Rule of the Order to be his rightful counsellors.<sup>82</sup> He had followed the dictates of his own will and the dubious advice proffered by lay people (noch syeme eygenem willin folgete fremden rathe werltlicher lute).<sup>83</sup> He had surrounded himself with astrologers (sternsehern und wyssagern), whose



prognostications had made him go to war. Rendered over-confident by this company, the Grand Master had insulted the greater officers and barricaded himself into the headquarters.<sup>84</sup>

There was another aspect of the charges: the frustration of the Prussian populace with a man bent upon recklessly waging war. The land was ruined and the coinage debased. The tax burden was crippling and the imported mercenaries were more trouble than they were worth. Letters counselling peace were mysteriously mislaid while those in favour of war were made public. Put briefly, the Putsch demonstrates that both senior officers of the Order and Prussian society were not prepared to swallow the Grand Master's life or death analysis of Prussian-Polish relations. In a letter to Sigismund, replying to accusations made by a further member of the von Plauen clan, Heinrich lord of Greiz, the officers explained that the deposition had taken place because of 'the common good and the necessity of the Order and the Land'. The extravagances of his regime and the tide of complaints were so great 'that one could no longer bear it' (daz man des nicht lenger geleiden mochte).<sup>85</sup> Something like a sigh of relief was uttered by Peter von Wormditt writing from Venice on 15 January 1414

It (the deposition), is, thank God, well done and one could not have done anything better for the Order at this time. If it had not happened it would have been to the entire Order's destruction since he would follow nobody other than his own bad sense (wend her nymant wolde

volgen denne synem bozem synne)<sup>86</sup>

The former Grand Master was sent to Engelsburg, a key commandery in the south-west, with a formidable array of baggage, while his brother was sent to ponder his misdeeds - which included disobeying the Marshal in the campaign of 1413 as well as murder - in lonely Löchstedt.<sup>87</sup>

7. The Wars of 1422 and 1431-33; devastation and incompetence

In 1422 Wladislaw of Poland and Duke Witold of Lithuania calculated that the Order would not be able to raise mercenaries in Bohemia on account of the Hussite wars, which would also distract the attention of King Sigismund. They were also hoping to gain from the change of Grand Master in that year whereby Kuchmeister was succeeded by von Rusdorf.<sup>88</sup>

Although we are not well informed about the destruction caused in 1422, there are two excellent modern accounts of the course of the fighting by Ekdahl and Lückcrath.<sup>89</sup> Sven Ekdahl concludes his study of the war on an optimistic note, the Niederland was spared from destruction, the greater part of a costly mercenary army was steered back to the Reich and, through the 'eternal peace' the Order purchased time to recover its flagging strength.<sup>90</sup> Here, the emphasis will be on the negative aspects of the conduct of the war. It will be argued that because Order generals had different tactical views

the war was incompetently fought, with confusion in the minds of both many officers of the Order and the men from the localities. While the former wrote urgent and irritable letters requesting orders, the latter protested about the chaos by walking home. The Order's conduct of this war therefore becomes an aspect of the alienation of Prussian society from its government.

A few days after the declaration of war on 14 July, the King rode towards Prussia with forces from Little Poland, effecting a juncture with the army from Great Poland and the Lithuanians on 23 July at Czerwinsk on the Vistula. In the last days of July they crossed the southern frontier of the commandery of Osterode and, failing the decisive encounter with an army of the Order which they were looking for, settled down to besiege Lobau in the bishopric of Culm.<sup>91</sup> The manner in which the siege was conducted was recorded by an eye-witness the Vogt of Dirschau in a letter dated 5 August 1422.

on Sunday morning the King and duke Witold came with great forces before Lobau and they have laid siege with their forces upto to-day. They have closed the first ditch by the Middle Mill and they have destroyed the great sluice so that we have no more water apart from that which is in the town ditches ... they shoot fire arrows (fuer pfeyle), frequently into the town. Due to the grace of God they have not done much harm. Also your worthiness should know that we have caught a prisoner who has confessed to us that the King has no more than one cannon, although he has sent some wagons to the cannon that he has in the town of Bresc, and the same cannon will be brought into this land over Lautenburg ... The prisoner has said to us that the King has less than half so many men as he had in the year of

Tannenberg, but that duke Witold has as many men, and that is true. But as we can see from day to day, when they ride in the field, they have no armour. Also your worthiness should know that last Sunday the Emperor of the Tartars arrived with a considerable body of men (mit eynem suberlichen hufen folkes), to help Witold in this land.<sup>92</sup>

On 6 August the Vogt in Bratteen said in a letter to the Grand Master that the allies were still before Lobau 'and nobody actually knows where he will turn next'. They had destroyed the mill installations at Lanschin so that no water was reaching the mill.<sup>93</sup> On the same day, the commander in Thorn reported that the enemy had crossed the Drewenz 'and to-day has burnt the village of Linken and many more villages in the vicinity of Rheden'.<sup>94</sup> On 7 August the siege of Lobau was called off and the King marched north-west to Riesenburg which was subsequently destroyed.<sup>95</sup> Since his siege guns were still en route from Poland, he abandoned the idea of an attack on Marienburg and took his army south, hugging the frontier with Poland. After further sieges at Gollub and Schönsee and worried by the imminence of outside interference, the King accepted a truce on 17 September. Ten days later the 'eternal peace' of Lake Melno was concluded.<sup>96</sup>

The response of the Order to the invasion was confused and confusing because of conflicting assessments of the necessary tactics to adopt. The Order Marshal put forward a plan in which defence forces would be minimal while all available manpower should be rushed to the frontier for a knock-out blow.<sup>97</sup> The commander

of Thorn recommended a more cautious policy of waiting for accurate intelligence about the direction of the Polish-Lithuanian attack. Von Rusdorf, conscious of the unwillingness of the contingents from the land to fight away from home for longer than four weeks unless they received their expenses and compensation for losses of horses or weaponry, adopted a middle course. The New Mark, Pomerelia and five fortresses in the Culmerland were put in a state of defence while a mobile army group was dispatched to Schonsee in the southern Culmerland.<sup>98</sup>

The result was that no one had a clear idea of what they were supposed to be doing. On 19 August the Order Marshal reported that none of the forces from other commanderies had met him at Christburg as planned. He blamed the confusion upon contradictory commands, adding that 'the people move up and down the land and do not know where they should go'.<sup>99</sup>

This confusion resulted in mass panic. On 22 August the Marshal wrote that he had warned the people of Christburg, Rastenburg and Marienwerder to stay put with their livestock and property 'but they did not heed me'. This he said was despite the fact that fifteen wagons with accompanying people and livestock had recently fallen into Polish hands while in flight from Rheden.<sup>100</sup> The confusion spread to the ranks of the Order's forces. On 1 August the commander of Thorn informed the Marshal that the contingents of Thorner citizens were becoming restless because their four weeks service was up and the food supplies were low, he continued:

we are amazed (so vorwundert uns sere), that we have not had a letter from you for so long so that we might have accurate news concerning where the King will go or how it is going with your forces or where you are.<sup>101</sup>

In a letter dated 6 August the commander of Elbing explained to the Grand Master that the contingents from the towns and countryside had deserted him 'since they had no food or other necessities'.<sup>102</sup> Early in September the Order Marshal wrote to von Rusdorf informing him that the freemen from the territory of Balga had gone home 'one after the other' on account of the costs and provisions which the Marshal had declined to give them'.<sup>103</sup> On 23 August the commander of Christburg said that nobody knew where the enemy was and that his forces were lost. He had barely twenty men with him and none of them were au fait with the geography of the Culmerland.<sup>104</sup> By surrendering the open countryside to the enemy, a breakdown of communications and the chain of command had taken place. For example, the Cellar-Master of Schwetz had lost contact with his commander who was in enemy controlled territory. There were no mercenaries in Schwetz but one hundred unarmed peasants had arrived in the town, some of whom were staving off starvation by labouring in the town ditches for pay. The Cellar Master was otherwise accompanied by four brothers of the Order, four servants and fifteen seamen.<sup>105</sup> On 12 September the Marshal informed von Rusdorf that the worthy people were refusing to stay in the field any longer and were

returning home so 'that they may protect their wives, children and property'.<sup>106</sup> Clearly, the war of 1422 was not an impressive performance on the part of the commanders of the Order.

Since Luckerath has described the events of the war of 1433 in great detail, we need give only the barest outline here.<sup>107</sup> In 1433 Prussia was ravaged by both the Poles and their Hussite allies. Despite this mesalliance between Christians and heretics, the response from the Reich was disappointing. At the beginning of June, the Hussites invaded the New Mark where they joined forces with the Woiwode of Poznan, Sandiwog of Ostrorog. As this force crossed into Prussia, the Grand Master opted for the defence of fortresses rather than an encounter in the open countryside. As in 1422, the Marshal wanted a 'hotter' war in order to delay the junction of the Hussite and Polish forces. Once again, von Rusdorf made a different tactical appraisal and confusion resulted. In the second week of August, the Hussites and Poles broke off from Konitz and made for Schwetz and the north along the left bank of the Vistula. On 1 September they encamped outside the walls of Danzig. Shots were exchanged and the harbour installations and suburbs were ravaged. Following an abortive attack upon the suburbs, the invading forces struck camp on 4 September and went north along the coast, plundering the monastery at Oliva en route.<sup>108</sup>

The effects of the wars of 1410, 1422 and 1433

upon the agrarian economy can be seen strikingly in the Grosse Zinsbuch, a comprehensive rent roll in handbook form, whose two parts were written down between respectively 1414-1422 and 1437-1438.<sup>109</sup> In the following Table, the numbers of occupied and deserted Hufen in the villages of six commanderies are given.

<u>Schlochau</u>		<u>Strassburg</u>	
<u>Occupied Hufen</u>	<u>Deserted Hufen</u>	<u>Occupied Hufen</u>	<u>Deserted Hufen</u>
17	33	20	18
12	42	50	12
14½	33½	40	21
16	38	17	26
24	17	12	26
32	23	19	26
28	22	13	47
26	36	4	19
48	9	25	27
27	11	21	29
11	25½	22	23½
14	36	9	37
12	48	24	12
33	13	17	44
38	32	10	43
24	36	15	30
24	40	10	12
20	17	4	11
31½	27½	34	16
9	40	4	25
	50	14	20
27	57	22	20
21	39	13	30
28	24	22	11
		22	23
		14	30
<hr/>		<hr/>	
537	749½	477	860½
<hr/>		<hr/>	



Graudenz

<u>Occupied Hufen</u>	<u>Deserted Hufen</u>
23½	7
49	30½
34	28
11	49
18	23
30	22
40	20
9	24
0	40
8	32
<hr/>	
222½	275½
<hr/>	

Gollub

<u>Occupied Hufen</u>	<u>Deserted Hufen</u>
11	23
21	10
10	29
33	17
30	11
49	0
36	14
17	39
39	0
46	0
15	43
20	22
<hr/>	
327	208
<hr/>	

Tuchel

<u>Occupied Hufen</u>	<u>Deserted Hufen</u>
22	38
33	48
44	8
14	11
9	20
19	35
20	60
28	18
44	28
37	3
24	32
11	21
35	20
19	53
17	5
0	36
0*	?*
50	0
<hr/>	
426	437
<hr/>	

Mewe

<u>Occupied Hufen</u>	<u>Deserted Hufen</u>
48	0
18	30
12½	20½
45	9
22½	0
36	14
20	21
45	0
30	0
23½	12½
101½	8
40	10
50	0
15	5
10	26
29	15
9	0
35	5
43	2
38	0
44	6
49	0
49	0
0	33
<hr/>	
813	217
<hr/>	

\* There are no figures for the number of Hufen in the

village of Grochaw. The Grosse Zinsbuch simply says that it was entirely deserted.

Some of the entries in the Grosse Zinsbuch confirm that warfare was responsible for the deserted Hufen. For example, the village of Lobchaw in the commandery of Graudenz should have paid 7m 16sc. as commutation for hay making services. However, 'they have not given it since the devastation' (das han sie sind der herunge nicht gegeben).<sup>110</sup> The entry for Powunden in the commandery of Christburg says

Powunden has 30 Hufen, the Hufe pays 1m. Sum of the rents 45m if the Hufen are fully occupied, but the whole village is deserted and has paid no rent since the war (und hat sedir dem streyte nicht geczinset)<sup>111</sup>

Sometimes the looting and cattle-rustling that typified all of the wars with the Poles and Lithuanians is reflected in the account books

There are many occupied Hufen in the abovementioned villages (in the commandery of Dirschau), upon which there are no draught animals (czyhende vyhe), and they are not able to pay their rents.<sup>112</sup>

Faced with a catastrophe upon this scale, the lordship had no alternative but to make concessions to the peasants. For example,

on the demesne at Stretczin 4 ploughs, at Sichcze 2 ploughs. The rent in money and in grain has not been entirely paid because one had to commute them on account of the poverty of the poor people (umbe armutes wille den armen leuten)<sup>113</sup>

In 1422 a Landesordnung has to be issued postponing the payment of rents and debts for one to two years on account

of the devastation.<sup>114</sup> The consequences of this for the income of the Order are clear. The commandery of Brattean had 381 occupied and 303 deserted Hufen. The rent for the total number of Hufen should have been 400m 9f. 2d. As a result of the deserted Hufen, the officers were 176½m short.<sup>115</sup> Their brethren at Graudenz should have received 315m rent: they received only 172m.<sup>116</sup> In 1444 it was said that 'where there were good villages and people living here and there, there are now woods and bushes'.<sup>117</sup>

#### 8. War weariness

The devastation caused by these wars resulted in war weariness. In December 1433 the Thorner Bürgermeister Herman Rewsap, speaking on behalf of the towns and countryside, told von Rusdorf and his senior officers that they should avoid war at all costs. He continued

should your Grace not do this, creating peace and quiet for us, your Grace should know that we will take it upon ourselves and seek out a lord who will give us peace and quiet.<sup>118</sup>

What this would mean in practice was reported to von Rusdorf by the commander of Thorn in a letter dated 18 August 1435. An informant had told him of night-time meetings in the town where the question of what to do should the Order again resort to war had been discussed. He added

should your worthy Grace take the field with your people against the enemy they will sit still in Thorn and will do nothing

and should your Grace then summon some  
of them from the town, they will hand  
over no one and will stand by one another<sup>119</sup>

Since the commander suspected that other towns were of the same mind, he suggested that the Grand Master should put the fortresses in a state of alert. On a more ominous note, suggestive of the readiness of others to fish in troubled waters, he said that he had obtained a copy of a letter from a citizen of Krakow where it was rumoured that the towns of the Ordensstaat had asked the king of Poland for help in their struggle with the Order regime.<sup>120</sup> Although it was dangerous to voice these pacific sentiments, people nevertheless did. The Culmer Burgermeister Johann Stercz spent several months in prison for warning the Order in the person of the commander of Schwetz that they should take counsel from the powerful in the land otherwise 'an ill wind may blow that will be slowly stilled'.<sup>121</sup>

In 1453 a list of grievances was drawn up to justify retrospectively the formation of the Prussian Bund. The authors of the document included a lengthy indictment of the Order's foreign policy since the battle of Tannenberg. Again and again, the document refers to the losses sustained by the average man in and following the wars of 1410, 1422 and 1433. In order to pay the taxes resulting from the indemnity of 1411, the citizens had had to 'cut the silver from our wives cloaks and dresses' and hand over the riches of their Rathhäuser.<sup>122</sup> In 1422 and 1433 their families had been raped and slaughtered and their houses burned

down. In the latter year, the Grand Master had promised to take the field personally, but had tarried in Marienburg. Worse, some of his subordinates had said 'that they would not stick their necks out or let themselves be killed for our wives, children and property' (das sie vor unsere weibe, kinder unnd gutter ir helse nicht mehr wogen wolden unnd sich zu tode slaen laszen).<sup>123</sup>

## PART II      The Making of a Tyranny

### 9.    The style of the regime

Although many of the reasons for tension between the Order and its subjects have been skilfully analysed in the existing literature, one aspect of the problem has not been satisfactorily examined: the day to day relations of officials of the Order with their subjects in towns and countryside. For it is how officials conduct themselves and how the regime that they represent reacts to their abuses of power that determines whether a people respects or resents its government.

That the fifteenth-century oppressions were not novelties may be shown by the case of Nothaft from the mid-fourteenth century. Shortly after Easter 1350, the council of Thorn sent a catalogue of complaints concerning the commander of the town Johann Nothaft, to the Grand Master Heinrich Dusemer.<sup>124</sup> The subject of the complaints was a member of a north Bavarian

family, many of whose scions were Order members.<sup>125</sup> Largely through connections made serving with Dusemer in Livonia, Nothaft rose from his position as commander of Birgelau to be provincial commander in Bozen within the territory of the Austrian dukes. Probably because of his connection with Dusemer, who became Grand Master in December 1345, Nothaft became commander in Thorn in the following year. Nothaft was not the right man for the job. Refusing to hear the evidence in a dispute between the citizens of Old and New Thorn, he expressed the wish that 'fifty or sixty of you should kill each other'. He had decided to build upon a field belonging to the New Town. Upon seeing the measuring poles being erected, the anxious citizens had sent a deputation to protest their claim to the field and to warn Nothaft that in accordance with a ruling of Ludolf Konig, any buildings, stone or otherwise, upon the field were to be summarily demolished. Nothaft, referring to himself in the first person plural, was amazed that they should be so concerned in his business, after all, he continued, 'he was not bothered when their wives or daughters or mothers went whoring with priests and monks'.

An exactor of taxes upon everything ranging from barrels of herring to helmets, Nothaft was in the habit of sending a pair of his servants along to the recalcitrant. The townsmen had complained about a case like this in 1349, only to be told by Nothaft that 'when he wanted them to come to him, they must go or he would send two or three servants to get them. If they were

killed, he would send two or three brothers. And, by God, he said, if they were killed, he would send something that our grandchildren (Kindeskint), would cry over.<sup>126</sup>

He had a novel way of ensuring custom in his court. The town surgeons (wuntarczten), were not to bind up a wound before he had inspected it, no doubt in the hope that he could force the injured to make formal accusations. His threats were boundless in their extravagance. On one occasion he had threatened to hang a councillor outside the town when the latter had attempted to prevent him from appropriating part of the legacy of a priest, on another, he had announced to two councillors who had protested the town's right to cut and carry timber, that if they did not beat a hasty retreat, 'he would settle it with them in the field'. Finally, in a discussion on the wrongs besetting Thorn, he had been heard to say, 'had I stabbed four of you in the stomach, I would not have wasted my life', adding, unnecessarily one feels, 'that we should not take that as a joke, but seriously'. So far from suffering any form of punishment for these outrages, one of which, had it been directed towards a superior, would have had grave consequences, Nothaft was transferred back to his old post in Bozen, where, as Landkomtur, he can be seen transferring three officers that October for burdening their posts with debts.<sup>127</sup>

This savage style continued in the fifteenth century. In 1420 a fire broke out in the Thorn commandery.

The circumstances were suspicious and the damage was extensive. The House commander reported the destruction of a beaverskin, barley and hay. He added that the citizens

came running, but without helping us with either ladders or buckets or water, nor by driving back the people who had run out of the town, but laughed at our losses with jeering, sneering remarks (dy burger lachende mit honischen reden bespotten unsirn schaden)<sup>128</sup>

With lordship like that practised by Nothaft - a rough-tough version of south German aristocratic hauteur - it was hardly surprising that this should have been the case.

It can be demonstrated that this was not some singular example of psychotic aberration. The Grounds for the Bund of 1453 includes several instances of acts of violence committed by officials of the Order. Wilhelm von Stein House commander in Thorn had had several persons drowned so that he could have his will with their wives. Abrosius the Cellar Master in Schonsee had had a man murdered in his bed and his corpse thrown into a lake. The Cellar Master in Roggenhausen had abducted the virgin daughter of a widow. Ulrich von Kinsberg, Pfleger in Neidenburg had had a man's hand cut off on account of a minor incident, despite the fact that the aggrieved party had lodged no complaint. The victim had had the misfortune to be a tenant of a member of the Bund.<sup>129</sup>

Other sources confirm that this was but a small selection from a large catalogue of outrages and administrative sharp practice. In a list of private complaints against the Order dated 20 April 1450, Gert von



Hutten, a citizen of Danzig, claimed that the commander of Danzig had measured his Hufen in a village in such a way that he had lost a considerable part of his property and a large sum in rent. Von Segern claimed that he had sold the commander in Schwetz a property called Sertewitz and that both the sale and the money paid had been entered in the Schöppenbuch at Schwetz. Von Segern claimed that he had not been paid in full and showed the commander the entry in the Schoppenbuch. The commander produced his 'hawss buch' which showed that everything had been paid.<sup>130</sup> The conduct of some of the Order's servants also left something to be desired. On 23 February 1453 one hundred angry citizens gathered before the Danzig Town Hall to protest about the behaviour of men in the employ of the Order. One of them had offered one of their wives two Nobles 'if she would sleep with him'. To escape his attentions the woman had had to flee the town. The servants had also threatened to abduct 'all of the pious women' from the town.<sup>131</sup>

As the Carthusian wrote in his admonitory tract of 1427, it served little purpose to appeal to the Grand Master in instances of abuse by lesser officers of the Order. The Grand Master's letters of intervention would be disregarded and the appellant would be put in prison, given a higher fine and driven out of his property.<sup>132</sup> Although Grand Master von Rusdorf in his articles of 1427 said that

whichever poor man appeals to the Grand Master on account of necessity shall be

allowed to seek out and bring his  
grievances to the Grand Master  
unhindered and shall not be beaten  
or imprisoned for it.<sup>133</sup>

the Grounds for the Union of 1453 contains several examples of the obstruction of appeals. The commander of Elbing had imprisoned Heinrich von Mockendorf on account of an appeal he had tried to make to the Grand Master. A man called Rucher was imprisoned and drowned because he had tried to take a case to the Papal court.<sup>134</sup>

There was also a degree of official indifference to acts of illegality by others when these did not conflict with the interests of the Order. In 1451 a man called Kirstan complained that he had been tortured by a group of freemen from the village of Shaken. Following a denunciation by an 'evil prophet', Kirstan was summoned by an Order Pfleger. The Pfleger explained that the Order Marshal had ordered him to lock up Kirstan although the Pfleger did not know why. He added that 'I must do what my superiors order' (Ich muss thun was mir meyn obirsten heissen). Eventually Kirstan was sent to Königsberg where the Marshal refused to help him. He was seized by the freemen and taken to a smith where he was put in irons. Once back in prison, the freemen accused him of having sold a piece of silver to a Königsberg goldsmith. Kirstan denied this charge and said, rashly as things turned out, that if they could find a goldsmith who would testify to that effect 'I will suffer all that I should suffer'. The freemen

busied themselves with finding witnesses. They also weighed up the comparabilities of cutting off one of his legs or sending him to Memel. Finally they asked the Marshal whether they could torture him. The Marshal said that they had no evidence but released Kirstan to them, since 'I need my prison myself' (ich bedarff meyn geuencnisse selben). The freemen then racked their prisoner until the veins of his hands and feet burst; tipped boiling brine over him and then burnt his sides with a pot of hot coals. The victim still maintained his innocence and told them that they could decapitate him if they liked. One of the freemen then announced 'I know another torture' (ich weis noch eyne pine), and fetched a shillings worth of candles with which they burnt him. Four days later they were debating whether to drown him or not. Isolated though this case is, it nevertheless reveals something about the Order officials involved. Commands were commands and the prison was full. It did not matter much what happened to Kirstan.<sup>135</sup>

10. The policy of the Order Towards landed Estates and the Peasantry

In his classic study of the rise of the eastern European 'Gutsherrschaft' - a system of large estates producing corn for the western European market - Prof. Carsten drew attention to the Order's concern to prevent

the formation or continued existence of large noble estates - created to suit the exigencies of conquest and colonisation - and to the longer-term process, occasioned by war, depopulation and the high corn prices obtaining on western markets, whereby the position of the peasantry in the East sank in the fifteenth century from being 'extremely favourable' to one of being bound to the soil.<sup>136</sup> In the course of his study, Carsten noted that

from the fourteenth century the Teutonic Knights, as well as the bishops, even bought out many noblemen's estates and founded villages on them, or let them out anew in small pieces for which peasants' dues had to be paid

and that this action by the lordship formed one of the stock complaints of the nobility in the fifteenth century.<sup>137</sup> A few years later, Carsten attributed this policy not only to the fact that the Order wanted to prevent the rise of a powerful rival nobility but to the fact that with the subjugation of the Prussians, 'the Order's military requirements receded into the background'.<sup>138</sup>

More recently, H. Boockmann has shown how the Order tried to re-define inheritance customs and the terms of tenure in accordance with its changing financial and military requirements after the battle of Tannenberg.<sup>139</sup>

Originally, the Order had granted immigrants from the Empire land held by Culmic law. This meant that they could pass on their property to either male

or female successors. In return they had to pay a recognition due, Pflugkorn or a bushel of grain for every 4 Hufen and they had to render military service on horseback. The amount of land held determined the type of equipment (and therefore its cost), to be carried in the performance of the service.<sup>140</sup>

Although peasants held land by Culmic law too, the mounted military service - whether with light arms and a horse or with heavy armour and several horses - the possession of either the higher or the lower jurisdiction over peasant tenants of their own,<sup>141</sup> and the relatively small part played by money dues in their obligations, served to mark off the upper strata of those holding by this form of tenure as the 'worthy people' (Ehrbarleute, viri honesti).<sup>142</sup> They, and the term has something of the elastic content of the term 'gentleman', were the politically and socially dominant men in their localities. They were the people represented in the Estates. They were the men who filled out the relatively small forces that the Order could hope to put into the field.

As soon as the Order decided to fight wars with mainly mercenary armies and as soon as the Order was pushed for money, the form of tenure enjoyed by the 'worthy people' - low cash dues in return for military service - would have to be challenged. Moreover, since this increasingly redundant military squirearchy was virtually coterminous with the Order's opponents in the Estates and later in the Prussian Union, a policy designed

to shake their tenurial security or to replace them with rent-paying peasants must have seemed attractive to the corporation.

The tenurial complexity of Prussia resulted in genuine areas of doubt about the content of the laws of inheritance.<sup>143</sup> The settlers brought the customs of their respective homelands with them; the Order granted them variants of their own laws; the indigenous Prussians had their own laws and groups like the Pomerelian Panenadel had their own forms of Polish customary law.<sup>144</sup> However one thing is very clear. The landed nobility wanted to preserve laws that they saw as being customary and time-honoured and which ensured that members of their families were given proper provision after the death of the father. The Order, on the other hand, recognised that it could capitalise through the closer definition of the circle of heirs to a property in such a way as to ensure more frequent reversions to the lordship. A memorandum which Boockmann has attributed to reactionary elements in the Order writing in anticipation of the Emperor's condemnation of the Prussian Union in the early 1450s, recommended precisely this form of streamlining of the laws of tenure.<sup>145</sup> It also suggested that the lordship buy out the holdings of the nobility in both the Order's own villages and in the vicinity of Order fortresses.<sup>146</sup> The Order was to consolidate its landed property and to ensure that no one interposed himself between the corporation and its rent paying peasants.

Since the Order lacked the resources to purchase land from the 'worthy people' on the scale intended - a point neglected by Boockmann - it would have to resort to sharp practice with the charters to reach its goal. The memorandum suggested that if the nobility could not find their charters for presentation to the lordship, they should be penalised to the extent of forfeiting their property.<sup>147</sup> Alternatively, the Order was to use the occasions provided by periodic presentations of their charters to re-survey properties in order to make the privileges conform with topographical facts.<sup>148</sup> In practice, the Order seems to have concentrated upon interfering with the land market. In 1440 the Estates asked the Grand Master not to hinder the sale of property between members of the nobility.<sup>149</sup> In 1444 the commander of Elbing relayed the complaints of the nobility that they were not being permitted to sell their property freely.<sup>150</sup> An example of this type of interference in the land market took place in 1451. A woman called von Rovenitz had been to see the Grand Master concerning an estate that her late son had left her. The commander of Schwetz said that the estate was small, 3 Hufen, and it had reverted to the Order. The woman and her friends had sold it for 30m, but the commander said that he had stopped the sale.<sup>151</sup>

The Order's appropriation of landed inheritances hurt the nobility in two crucial ways. Firstly, the Order's attempts to restrict the number of possible heirs in order to secure more frequent reversions to the

lordship meant hard times for the daughters of the nobility. Many of the individual complaints against the Order contained in the Grounds for the Union were concerned with the fate of destitute daughters. For example, the commander of Schwetz was charged with having taken an estate called Pnewen which he had given to a servant. The two infant heiresses had been left in the cow stall; one was eaten by dogs, the other became a whore.<sup>152</sup> Paul von Rusdorf had allegedly taken an estate called Zelislaw following the death of the owner Lazarus. He had then given it to a servant and Lazarus's daughter had received nothing.<sup>153</sup>

Secondly, the Order's policy of settling the estates acquired with rent-paying peasants touched the raw nerve of the nobility's self-esteem. In 1434 the Estates asked the Grand Master to settle newly acquired property with 'rittern' and 'knechten' who were necessary for the defence of the land.<sup>154</sup> In 1453 they said that estates acquired in this way were being settled with rent paying peasants (zu zinse unnd gebaurlichen erben gemacht werden), and that those who should have been called for military service were being taxed and then asked to stay at home. This, they claimed, was having perceptibly negative effects upon the Order's performance on the battlefield (und die banner im felde als wol zu dirkennen steet, sere geschweger werden).<sup>155</sup> However, from the Order's point of view this self-esteem, based on the Prussian nobility's claim that it was militarily indispensable, was illusory. As far as the Order was



concerned, they were no longer so necessary for the type of wars fought in the fifteenth century.

The gains to be derived from these attempts both to interpret the inheritance customs in the Order's favour and to interfere with the land market were counter-balanced by their adverse political consequences. This is clear from a letter dated 27 May 1452 in which the Vogt in Roggenhausen reported that

a good man has informed me that if your Grace allows the folk their laws concerning inheritances (erprechten), and Magdeburg law as it was observed before the battle of Tannenberg, they will be your Grace's loyal folk. If that is not the case, some of them have said to me that they are of a mind to unite with the Poles.<sup>156</sup>

A shorter-term solution had to be found to the financial problems of the Order. As Prof. Carsten's work has shown, both the Order and other landlords sought to solve the problems resulting from loss of population by increasing labour services, establishing maximum wage rates and by restricting the social and geographical mobility of the peasantry.<sup>157</sup>

The Carthusian monk said in his admonitory tract of 1427 that peasants were being forced to cut and carry timber into the towns by officers of the Order.<sup>158</sup>

Excessive demands for labour services from the Prussians had retarded their conversion to Christianity. They could not go to church because the Order officials wanted them out in the fields and woods.<sup>159</sup>

The connection between excessive labour services and a lack of enthusiasm for Christianity was also made by bishop Franciscus of Ermland in a letter to the Grand Master dated 26 January 1427. He had had a meeting with two commanders of the Order where they had 'discussed certain articles and in particular the article concerning the service of the Prussians, about which we have been very concerned that the Prussians will decline in the Faith'.<sup>160</sup> In 1434 the Estates complained about the 'ungodly and impossible labour services that the lords are making the poor people do'.<sup>161</sup> In 1441 Conrad von Erlichshausen ordered that no official of the Order 'shall force the free to cut timber free of knots (wagenschoss), or split-oak (clapperholcz).<sup>162</sup> However in 1453 it was still claimed that the peasants were being forced - in contravention of their charters - to do unnecessary labour services. This was making it difficult for them to pay their rents.<sup>163</sup>

That we are dealing here with a conscious policy on the part of the Order designed to maximise labour services is clear from a letter dated 29 December 1453. The Pfleger in Rastenburg began his letter to the Grand Master with reference to an earlier letter from the latter

as your Grace has written to me concerning the peasants of Schonfliess and how I should force and threaten them to do labour services beyond the content of their Handfesten (ubir ynholdunge yrer handfesten)<sup>164</sup>

The Pfleger said that he had not done this but had tried to explain to the surly peasants the distinction between labour services and what he called work 'for the common good of the whole land'. That meant that he wanted them to carry 6 Schock of timber over 6 miles before the onset of winter otherwise the work planned on the sluices for the following summer would be retarded. The peasants protested that their horses were too weak for the work and that if they themselves did it, they would fall down on their obligations. The Pfleger claimed that other villagers in the area had agreed to do the work on the basis of one man from every 6 Hufen but they maintained that 'they were not bound to do it'.<sup>165</sup> The Pfleger apparently knew what Witold Kula has called 'the coefficient of realizable coercion',<sup>166</sup> or in plainer words, the depths to which one can exploit a peasant before he becomes counter-productively useless and inefficient.

As the peasants of Rastenburg said, these labour services led to a dislocation of their own activities: tilling their plot of land to feed themselves and to pay the rent. The same point was made by the Schulzen from the villages of the commandery of Christburg in the summer of 1429. The Grand Master had ordered the commander to supply 30 men with axes, spades and 8 wagons

for building work in Memel. The Schulzen had said that the Prussians did not have 36 horses able to drag carts laden with timber. The German villagers were no consolation either. Only four German villages were fully occupied or paying their full rents. The commander said that he needed all of his peasants for harvest work and he feared that the Prussians would be lackadaisical about the work at Memel.<sup>167</sup> This was what the Order Marshal discovered in the summer of 1416. The carpenters working in Memel had asked him not to send thirty Prussians since they did not know either how to dig or to build dams.<sup>168</sup> sometimes the officials of the Order met with outright refusal. On 23 June 1453 the commander of Ragnit reported that the free men of Laukischen and Labiau had refused to clear a way towards Ragnit so that the commander could drive oxen there. The freemen maintained that hitherto when the Grand Master or the Marshal wanted to go to Ragnit they had brought their own people with them to do the work. They were also refusing to do dam work at Tilsit or Memel.<sup>169</sup>

It seems that the Order in the mid-fifteenth century was alive to the possibilities of building up its share of rent-paying peasants, re-writing the laws of tenure and finally, of maximising peasant labour services. While the latter aim was not incompatible with the aims of other landlords, the first two policies certainly were. They served to alienate the Prussian nobility from the Order regime. Yet, it should not be forgotten that while the nobility could combat the Order through the Estates,

the Union and ultimately with armed might, the peasants were also able to resist in their own way. Nothing is more misleading than the conventional picture - and this applies to historians of a liberal-democratic temper as well as their Marxist colleagues - of the eastern European peasantry in the dawn of the re-enservment as abjectly crushed under successive seigneurial ordinances or as miserable fugitives from a monolithically oppressive feudal system. They might well have been threatened with having their ears nailed to the pillory, but they had mighty weapons of their own - inertia, deliberate incompetence and sullen indifference to the job in hand.

#### 11. Fishing

Similar inter-related questions of economic and political power arose from the Order's attempts to define fishing privileges more narrowly. As we have seen in an earlier Chapter, the Order usually granted fishing privileges for the satisfaction of the needs of the grantee's table and carefully specified the type of tackle that was to be used.<sup>170</sup> That these stipulations were often ignored can be seen from a report on a Diet held in the Culmerland in 1437. The Order officials were amazed that professional fishermen were being employed in clear contravention of the terms of the Handfesten.<sup>171</sup>

On 1 June 1450 the commander of Rheden wrote to the Grand Master concerning the fishing activities

of Jenschon von Clement. The worthy people had told the commander that in the time of commander Georg von Egeling (1434-36), it was forbidden to fish in the lake before the house. Subsequently the lake had been dammed and transformed into a mill pond. In an acrimonious discussion on the subject amongst the worthy people a man called Hoyke von Schymmelow had used strong words in the course of protesting that he had purchased the right to fish there. The commander went on to give a brief history of the lake. In the days before Jenschon's ancestors had received their privileges, a sheep pen had stood in front of the commandery. In that time the sheep had had to be driven through the town and had sometimes suffered injury when they passed wagons in gateways or on bridges. In order to stop this, the townsmen had given the commandery the lake which the Order had dammed and turned into a mill pond. The commander reckoned that the fact that no sheep were being herded through the town was proof of the truth of his tale. His predecessors had stocked the pond with fish. It was also - apart from water running off the fields in winter - the only water supply for the commandery. The commander would have preferred it had Jenschon been told to fish elsewhere, for he feared that he would have to extend the privilege to others. Jenschon was jauntily proclaiming 'I will fish there whether you like it or not'.<sup>172</sup> On 6 May 1451 the commander reported that he had asked the citizens for their privileges pertaining to fishing. They argued

that the privileges permitted them to fish in the pond with all types of tackle except large nets. They refused to let the commander see the privileges.<sup>173</sup>

On 27 March 1453 the officers in Thorn reported that the landed people were hiring fishermen who fished all year round with large - and therefore prohibited - tackle. They were also selling their illegal catches in the town. Shortly before, Hans von Heymszode had gone fishing with his son and some friends in the lake behind the Order house at Birgelau. When the Pfleger there had tried to stop them, they had chased him away with their swords.<sup>174</sup> On 23 November 1453 it was reported that the Master of Fish in Luxayn had caught Niclus Keiserwalt out on the first ice catching a prodigious quantity of fish, which he then sold. The Chapter had not yet sent men out with the heavy nets since the ice was too thin. They were going after pike for the Grand Master's table.<sup>175</sup>

In the same year, the Vogt in Dirschau said that one of his demesne officials had caught a peasant in the act of spearing pike (meth eyn hechtsper und der stach hechet). The man's lord, Schoff von Banckaw, had appeared outside the prison where the peasant was being held shouting 'why have you locked my man up?' (worumme hostu mir meynen man ingeleget?). He continued on this haughty note, 'I will have him out whether you like it or not' (ich wil en aus nemen is sey dir lip ader leyd). Schoff then made one of his henchmen climb over a fence to let him in through a gate. After Schoff had repeatedly

hammered on the door of the prison, a terrified boy opened it. He took his peasant out and departed, saying to the demesne official 'I have taken my peasant whether you like it or not'.<sup>176</sup>

Since the fishing question brought together issues of economic and political power it also created the sort of angry scenes that we have been observing. In a letter dated 17 December 1453, the Vogt in Leipe reported a discussion between the worthy people of Liessau. One of the participants had said that 'if a piece of him (the Vogt) were on a dish I would be happy'. Another had expressed the wish that the bishop of Heilsberg and the commander of Elbing should be quartered and hung up along the highways. Others had discussed the fishing issue

'What liberties has the Grand Master given you?' 'To fish with hewleittern'. The other said to him, 'The Grand Master said to me "while I am Master, you shall not fish in the lakes". And another said "yes, the Master will make my net small enough"'.<sup>177</sup>

## 12. The proximity of houses of the Order to the towns

Much of the ill-will between the Order and the townsmen stemmed from the fact of physical proximity. Frequently conflicts arose concerning building work by one party or the other. For example, in a letter dated 25 July 1442 the Order Marshal gave the Grand Master his opinion on building work in the old town in Königsberg. The Marshal was particularly concerned about the future



uses of the planned extension of the town hall with a clock and bell-tower. The councillors assured him that the tower would not be any higher than the roof of the Rathaus.<sup>178</sup>

In 1440 the Danzigers complained concerning a tower that Commander von Plauen had built near the new fish market. It lay upon the town's liberty and soil and therefore they wanted it to be demolished.<sup>179</sup> On 22 November 1442 they complained concerning further building work undertaken by the commander in the town. They were also concerned by the arrival of brethren from other Chapters, cannon and crossbowmen in the Order Schloss. The Grand Master informed them that the reinforcements had moved along and that in any case, transfers from one house to another were routine. He added, 'there are perhaps fifty men in the house, it is a small one, what will they do to you?'. He then asked them and their colleagues from Königsberg why they had strengthened the watch and imported cannon from Lübeck. Later, Heinrich Vorrath told the Grand Master that the Danzigers had reinforced the watch because of the danger of fire. Meynke Colner added that with so many brewers and bakers, the poor had complained about the fire precautions. The area around the crane had been built up because wolves were slipping into the town through the gap.<sup>180</sup> On 21 June 1444 the wall around the crane was again the subject of dispute. The Grand Master's technical advisor had argued that one thickness of wall could support the load, the Danzig councillors said that it had to be thicker.<sup>181</sup>

In March 1453 they disagreed about a mill that the townsmen wanted to put up near the town moat. The Grand Master and the commander went to the Rathaus to discuss the question. The councillors said that they had been forced to build it by the commonalty. When asked whether this was so, the commonalty shouted yes.<sup>182</sup>

Similar disputes occurred in Elbing. On 29 November 1442, the Bürgermeister of the old town complained about a drawbridge that the commander had erected between the Schloss and the town. The work, which the Bürgermeister claimed had left the town open to attack, had been carried out whilst he and his colleagues were attending a Diet. The citizens were enraged.<sup>183</sup> In 1453 it was the Order's turn to complain. In August, the House commander reported that the citizens of the old town were building a massive rampart in the vicinity of the Order's granary. When asked to desist, the councillors argued that the commonalty had forced them to do it and that they would stop only when the Order had removed its guns from the tower of the commandery.<sup>184</sup> In October it was the Order's turn to complain. On 18 October the Tressler, accompanied by two other officers went out to inspect the strengthening of the walls being carried out by the Council. The Tressler could not see that the work would benefit anyone and said that it would result in mistrust and ill-will. The Bürgermeister replied that the citizens had watched the stepping-up of the daytime watch in the commandery and were afraid they would be attacked. The Tressler told the Grand Master that he had ordered the

House commander to stop the daytime watch but, secretly, to put the house in a state of defensive alert.<sup>185</sup>

These grievances figured in the Grounds for the Bund of 1453. The Order had undermined part of the town wall in Elbing and had denied the citizens the ancient right to close the gates facing the commandery.<sup>186</sup>

### 13. The towns, mills

From the beginning of the Ordensstaat the right to construct mills belonged to the lordship. Others were rarely granted this valuable right.<sup>187</sup> This right was hotly contested by the townsmen. In a letter dated 19 January 1447 the commander of Thorn reported that the bakers of the Altstadt were refusing to mill their grain in the Order's New Mill. They wanted the commander to instal a man to help them in the work and they claimed that the 'mill penny' had been abolished throughout the land. The commander was having to buy grain and this circumstances and the fact that this mill lay idle was causing him great difficulties. He noted that the citizens charged a mill penny in their mills.<sup>188</sup> On 2 April he said that other mills belonging to the Order were now idle.<sup>189</sup> On 26 May 1449 he complained to the Grand Master that the mills were not working at full-tilt because of problems with unrepaired dams and sluices and that in the previous year the mills had stood idle for a whole fortnight.<sup>190</sup>

A letter dated 27 March 1453, which records

the injuries suffered by the commandery of Thorn at the hands of the citizenry shows how the latter did their best to thwart the Order's attempts to canalise milling business. The citizens of the Altstadt had diverted the water flow away from a mill belonging to the Order by means of a disused stream. The waters now drove the wheels of a mill belonging to the citizens. They had also built a horse-powered mill which 'has caused the commandery noticeable losses'.<sup>191</sup>

The commander's complaint contained an element of disingenuousness. Since 1394 the Diets had discussed the 'mill penny', the portion of the ground goods that whoever used the mill had to pay the miller. The payment was called the 'Metze', which in Prussia consisted of 1/16 of a bushel.<sup>192</sup> In Danzig the citizens were concerned about the way a temporary increase of this tax was in danger of becoming customary. In the time of Winrich von Kniprode (1351-1382), the Order mill in Danzig had burnt down. In order to rebuild it, the Grand Master had asked the council and commonalty to allow the commander of Danzig to raise a double Metze (die dubbelde metcze), for one year.<sup>193</sup> In 1450 the citizens complained that the double Metze was 'granted to your predecessors as a favour and not as a right' (czugelassen von gonst wegen und nicht von recht). The Order argued, on the basis of a thorough search through its records, that the tax dated from the time when the Order had allowed the brewers to run pipes from a stream into their works.<sup>194</sup> In 1453 the

tax was still being levied.<sup>195</sup>

14. Trade, protection and life on the frontier

The frontier between Poland and Prussia was a twilight zone much given to misunderstandings, plundering and strife. Power and protection ceased to be exclusive and jurisdictions became confused. For example in 1448 the commander of Schwetz reported that some of his peasants had fled to Poland and that Rynasz and Sambow, the local potentates, had forbidden him to pursue them. At the same time, Sambow had ventured to ride into one of his villages within the commandery where he gouged out the eyes and cut off the hand of a poor shepherd (eynem armen hirten seyne ougen usgestochen und darczu eyne handt abgehuwen).<sup>196</sup> In the following year the commander complained about Stenczla Succolafsky and his clan who had beaten four peasants in the village of Suppany and abducted three more from other villages.<sup>197</sup> On several occasions the Grand Master had to complain to the Starost in Nakel concerning his behaviour towards a miller. The mill at Kennitz had been destroyed in the war of 1433. The commander of Tuchel had rebuilt it and was sharing the profits with the Starost. However the latter persistently tried to extort more than his share from the miller, and, having abducted the latter, ignored all attempts by the Order to settle the matter by arbitration.<sup>198</sup>

The merchants of both lands had a hard time of

it. This was inevitable since strange tongues and odd money frequently left room for swindles and deceit. In 1449 Bartholomeus Dobelaw took salt and hops to Poland where he was paid in counterfeit money. Since he did not realise his misfortune, he in turn paid someone else and was thrown into prison by the Starost. He also lost his horses, wagon and all of his money.<sup>199</sup> Again, in 1447 the Grand Master wrote to Schulinszsky lord of Bromberg on behalf of Anthonius Lamprecht from Thorn. Whilst sitting upon his wagon, the latter had been insulted by some of the locals who had daubed crosses on his clothes with chalk. In the resulting altercations, Anthonius had slightly wounded one of his assailants in the chest with a knife. He was immediately seized, taken before a court and fined 12 Grosschen. Everyone appeared satisfied with the result. However the Vogt of Bromberg arrived on the scene and refused to accept the fine. He demanded 15m 'polanschen czall' or else Lamprecht would stay in gaol. Eight days later the Vogt wanted 50m or else Lamprecht would lose his head.<sup>200</sup>

Lesser traders were also vulnerable to acts of brute force whilst en route. In 1447 some peasants from Tuchel went to Poland to purchase grain with four horses and two wagons. Jacob Runge had sold them 30 bushels of oats and then waylaid them on the way home, taking both the grain and the transport.<sup>201</sup> Two years later the peasant had got his horses back but was still missing the wagons, a new plough share, an axe and his cloak.<sup>202</sup> Officials of the Order were not immune from this type

of banditry. In 1449 the Pfleger in Licke sent wood and crates containing cloth through Poland by water. The lord of Roszan had held up the carriers for three days and had opened one of the crates, taking some cloth. He had demanded 3 Schok Grosschen to let them on their way.<sup>203</sup>

Accidents resulting in damage to life or property took time to sort out and tempers easily became frayed. On 6 May 1451 the commander of Schwetz reported that a Lithuanian timber convoy had inadvertently rammed into the dam by the commandery. Since the water was still high, it was not yet possible to assess the damage but it was expected to be extensive. The owner of the load was a Polish priest called Nicklas who claimed to be the King of Poland's chief scribe (oberste schreiber). The commander held the man in charge of the convoy, who claimed to be the priest's brother, until a 30m claim had been settled. He let the convoy continue its journey. The priest had threatened to bring the commander before two courts if the load was held up.<sup>204</sup> On the following day the commander wrote to the Grand Master again. This letter is of great interest since it demonstrates to what extent complaints - even if unjustified - had become the order of the day. He said that no one had been imprisoned and they had all received regular food and drink. The priest had told him to release the cargo and to allow a man called Jancken von Torgerwisch to stand surety for the 30m. The crew had promised to pay more if the damage proved greater. The House commander had

ascertained that Jancken's offer was not a serious one. The commander repeated that no one was in prison and the convoy had resumed its journey.<sup>205</sup> Sometimes the authorities in Poland did their best to bring those who harassed merchants to book. On 14 October 1436 the 'Protoconsul' of Rosan reported that a Danzig merchant Johannes Schultz had been robbed and murdered in a wood on his way to Wansoczin. After the merchant's servant had reported the attack, one of the bandits was immediately apprehended and another discovered after the woods had been searched. The culprits were subsequently tortured and then taken to a crossroads where they were broken on the wheel.<sup>206</sup>

However, examples of such swift justice were exceptional against the casualness with which the Polish authorities treated the grievances of the Prussian merchants. The number of letters dealing with the same stories contained in the Grand Master's registers of correspondence suggests that although the Order made every effort to stop these abuses, in practice there was very little that it could do.

#### 15. Trade, taxation and competition

The merchants of Prussia made their money by acting as middlemen between the eastern lands with their raw materials and semi-finished products and western lands with both raw materials and manufactured goods. In the course of the fifteenth-century this



felicitous position was challenged in two ways. Firstly, by the merchants of the lands with the raw materials and English and Dutch interlopers who wanted the median position for themselves, and secondly, by the Order which, in addition to being heavily engaged in trade itself, used its position as lord of the land to make permanent the taxes that had been introduced for temporary and specific purposes.<sup>207</sup>

The latter point - which is what concerns us here - may be illustrated by briefly looking at Prussian trade with Lithuania and Poland. Lithuania supplied the Prussian merchants with forest products such as timber, barrels of ash, wax, furs, ox-hides and hemp.<sup>208</sup> In addition to the road routes, the merchants used the waterways to penetrate Lithuania, chiefly because the type of goods being carried - for example salt or timber - were easier to transport by water. In the early fifteenth century the Order undertook various hydraulic projects designed to shorten both the journey overland and the voyage over the Kurisches Haff.<sup>209</sup> In March 1431 a tax was introduced to pay for the completion and upkeep of the five sluices at Labiau. It was levied at the rate of one shilling for every Last of goods passing through the sluices.<sup>210</sup> By May 1431 the towns were complaining that the tax consisted of one shilling in the Mark; in other words it was being levied according to the worth rather than the volume of the cargo.<sup>211</sup> This was not without significance if the merchant happened to be trading in mink or polecat furs rather

than timber.

The tax at Labiau occasioned complaints against the Order from the Prussian Estates and the Lithuanians. In 1442 and 1449 the former demanded that the tax be done away with.<sup>212</sup> In July 1442, the Boyar Andrewski Dowonnowic, plenipotentiary of Grand Duke Casimir, said that the Lithuanian merchants were being burdened with taxes that were unknown in the time of Duke Witold. In his reply, Grand Master von Erlichshausen testily said that the five sluices and five miles of canal had been built to provision Ragnit and Memel and that each of the sluices had cost 600m to build. Besides, the Lithuanian merchants derived as much benefit from the waterway as their Prussian colleagues.<sup>213</sup>

A similar process can be seen at work in the question of poundage (Pfundzoll). This tax was introduced at the Hanseatic Diet of Greifswald on 7 September 1361 and was designed to cover part of the costs of the war between the Wendish towns and the Danes.<sup>214</sup> A turning point was reached in 1389 when the Prussian towns decided to raise the Pfundzoll without the consent of their fellow Hansards but with the consent of the Grand Master to whom they owed money.<sup>215</sup> In this way, a Hanseatic tax became a tax raised by the Prussian towns and then a tax raised primarily for the benefit of the Order. In June 1403 the Diet at Marienburg allotted the Order a third and the towns two thirds of the receipts.<sup>216</sup> Following renewed borrowing from the Order by the towns, the transformation of a Hanseatic tax into a seigneurial

harbour tax was virtually complete. In June 1409 it was agreed to raise the Pfundzoll so that the Order collected two thirds and the towns one third of the receipts.<sup>217</sup> Resistance to this process could not be total since the towns were dependent upon the Order for arranging trade agreements and for support in their dealings with other members of the Hansa. It was also the Prussian towns which had first ventured down the road of territorialising the Pfundzoll.<sup>218</sup> Under Paul von Rusdorf the entire income from the Pfundzoll went into the coffers of the Order.<sup>219</sup> Later, Konrad von Erlichshausen allowed the towns their third of the Pfundzoll but the third, which was collected in Danzig alone, had to be equally divided between the towns of Culm, Thorn, Elbing, Danzig and Königsberg.<sup>220</sup> We know something about the way in which the tax was collected from a document that is presumed to date from the period in which von Rusdorf was Grand Master. The Master of Poundage (Pfundtmeister), occupied a booth along with a scribe and the poundage book. He also had a chest with three locks. Two of the keys were kept by the Grand Master, the third with the council of the town concerned. A locked iron bar ran through the locks. The Master of Poundage had three servants whose job was to keep watch on a bridge for ships and to collect the notice that the ship had paid the tax. This notice had to be handed in at least a day before the ship set sail. If this was not done, the crew were liable to fall foul with the

Master of Poundage's subordinate, the Master of the Estuary (Mundemeister). All incoming vessels had to strike their sails and report their ships' name to him and he would then go out to inspect the cargo. He could open any crates or barrels that he was suspicious of and confiscate the contents. It was forbidden to sail at night.<sup>221</sup> The Mundemeister, who was normally a knight-brother from the Danzig Chapter, also collected the moorage tax (Pfahlgeld), which amounted to 1/1500 of the value of the cargo.<sup>222</sup> There was much room here for graft and officiousness. In 1433 the towns complained about the harassment (Rastament), they were experiencing at the hands of the officials collecting the Pfundzoll.<sup>223</sup> A complaint dated 1440 explained that when a ship entered the estuary of the Vistula, the captain had to hand over between 1 and 4 Gulden to put him in the way of paying the Pfundzoll. Should the captain ask for the return of the money upon his departure, he would be told by the Mundemeister 'I will board your ship and I will see whether you have paid the Pfundzoll properly, if you haven't, you won't know what's coming to you' (Ik wil eynen burding nemen und wil an dyn schiff legen, und wil bezeen, ab du och recht vorpfundt host, fynde ich anders, du salt nicht wissen, wy du von mir kumpst).<sup>224</sup> Even those forced into harbour on account of storms received no mercy from the Mundemeister. In 1424 the chief scribe in Danzig noted that 'the master of poundage takes taxes from those who have put in through necessity and are here neither to buy nor to sell'.<sup>225</sup>

In addition to these attempts to manipulate taxes, the Order also used its position as lord of the land to favour its own trading activities at the expense of the merchants from the towns. Ships with cargoes belonging to the Order did not have to pay the Pfundzoll.<sup>226</sup> In cases where merchants had died insolvent, the Order put itself at the head of the queue of creditors; as we have seen earlier, it was not so easy for anyone to collect debts from deceased brothers of the Order who sheltered under the cloak of collective ownership.<sup>227</sup> When the towns operated export embargoes, the Grand Masters could profit by selling individual licences of exemption.<sup>228</sup> The Order also abused its preferential status on the markets to buy up goods which it then resold at a higher price. In 1408 the Estates said that the Order was forcing the sale of wool; in 1444, the officers were said to be selling grain outside the urban markets.<sup>229</sup> In his article of 1427 von Rusdorf stipulated that officers engaged in trade should do so only if it was not to the detriment of the land.<sup>230</sup> However, when in March 1439 the Estates raised precisely this point, he curtly replied 'why shouldn't they (the Order officers), engage in trade? Have the towns any charters that say that they should not engage in trade?'<sup>231</sup> In 1450 the delegates to the Diet at Elbing - with years of complaining about this subject behind them - reminded the Grand Master that in the past only the two *Gross-Schäffer* of the Order had pursued trade. Von Erlichshausen replied somewhat disingenuously:

dear subject, this matter was also discussed by our predecessors, and it was recognised then that the more merchants there were in the land, the better it would be for the whole community. Since the time when anyone from Russia, Poland, Lithuania and other lands has been free to trade in this land, we thought it unjust that brothers of our Order should be left out.<sup>232</sup>

This line of argument - essentially the more the merrier - was not particularly convincing given the many advantages that the Order enjoyed over other, lesser traders. In June 1446, the commander of Balga reported that a rumour was abroad amongst the citizens of Königsberg that the Order was planning to introduce an excise and a general tax. It was also rumoured that the lordship was planning to take over all timber imports to the detriment of the merchants.<sup>233</sup> Although the content of the rumour was disavowed, it is interesting that people made such a close connection between the Order's pursuit of its trading interests and its fiscal policy.

#### 16. Interference in the government of the towns

Although the most nefarious example of the Order's interference in the government of a town will be discussed at some length in a later Chapter, the subject of the Order's attempts to 'adjust' the composition and membership of urban councils is a fitting point to end our discussion of the increasingly tyrannical nature of the regime.

The government in towns like Danzig and Thorn

was in the hands of either one or the other of two councils. The 'sitting council' consisted of 10 councillors and a Bürgermeister and his Kompan. The 'common council' was larger and consisted of all those who had left the sitting council. It was normally under the leadership of four former Bürgermeistern. The elections took place in February of each year, in such a way that the new councillors were co-opted by the sitting council from either the common council or the bench of jurors (Schöppenbank). The jurors, in their turn, were chosen by the sitting council.<sup>234</sup>

There has been considerable scholarly debate over the years as to whether the lordship had the right to reject any of those co-opted onto the councils. H. Wermbter thought that under Magdeburg law the lordship was entitled to reject any candidate whom it had objections to.<sup>235</sup> More recently, Leinz has argued that under Magdeburg law the lordship had no right to interfere in the composition of the councils.<sup>236</sup> Both scholars, whose opinions deserve respect, refer to a document dated 1403-1410 to support their differing views. In this letter, the commander of Danzig outlined the prospects for the forthcoming elections to the Danzig council to the Grand Master. The passage cited by Wermbter says

we have been informed by the eldest of our house that they (the Danzigers), will hold their elections (kohere), eight days before S. Peter's day with the advice of the commander and House commander, and if they choose someone whom we do not consider useful or satisfactory, then they must let him go and choose another so that, throughout, the election takes place with our

advice and consent<sup>237</sup>

However, the rest of the letter is worth considering. The commander went on to mention two likely men who would be entirely pliant to the wishes of the Order whom he would like to have seen on respectively the council and the bench of jurors, 'since I recognise that they will be useful and loyal to us in many matters' (wenn ich dirkonne das sy uns yn vyl sachen do nutcze und getruwe syn). The commander clearly wanted to push 'his' men into the charmed circle that had hitherto governed the town. He said that the councillors arranged it so that 'one gives his consent to the other, so that one chooses his friends, another his, and one brother-in-law chooses the other'. However the first part of the letter shows that it was not so simple to foist a place-man into this cosy club. The commander had entertained ambitions on behalf of Heinrich von Puczke, but the Bürgermeistern had rejected him. The commander had retaliated by refusing the townsmen permission to construct a shooting pitch because 'whatever the Grand Master and we ask you to do, you do not do'.<sup>238</sup> It seems to me that - whatever the Magdeburger Schöppenstuhl had to declare in 1398<sup>239</sup> - here was another grey area in which the Order and the townsmen had different perceptions of their own history.

History apart, it became imperative for the Order in the wake of the defeat at Tannenberg and the refusal of Thorn and Danzig to consent to a general tax, to try to change the composition of the councils in



those towns. Again, this matter has been the subject of scholarly debate. According to Krollmann, whose picture of urban government is rather monochromatic, von Plauen did away with the oligarchs and restored 'the legitimate influence of the lordship over the elections to the council'. He deposed most of the old councillors and jurors and replaced them with men from the commons, 'from all trades'. He left a few of the oligarchs in place because otherwise the Order would be deprived of their education and political talents and because the men from the lower orders would be more dependent upon the support of the lordship.<sup>240</sup> According to Leinz, this democratization of the councils did not take place. Rather, the Grand Master bolstered the authority of the sitting council since, being smaller, it was easier to dominate than the common council.<sup>241</sup> Probably the best explanation - discussion of which is hampered by the fact that we do not know who joined which council - was given by Simson. The Order managed to intrude Heinrich von Putzig and Albrecht Dodorf - the men mentioned in the commander's letter quoted above - and four men with connections with the guilds: but the "Bürgermeister Tidemann Huxer, his Kompan Hermann Hitfeld and four others were scions of patrician families. Simson concludes from this that the Order was trying to weaken the town's resistance to its' increasing fiscalism by creating two parties within the council without forfeiting the political talents of the oligarchs.<sup>242</sup> In Thorn seven patricians were ejected from the council

and replaced by men who had not made an appearance up till then in the electoral lists.<sup>243</sup> Although both these enforced changes in the government of the towns were not, as far as is known, repeated, they figure amongst the articles of the 'Origins of the Union'. Von Plauen had deposed the councillors in Thorn 'against the content of our privileges'; the Bürgermeister and two councillors in Danzig were brutally murdered by the Grand Master's brother.<sup>244</sup> When the day of reckoning arrived, these matters were weighed up alongside the violations of inheritance customs, fishing rights, trade privileges and the failure to offer a convincing alternative to the far away regime of the Polish kings.

NOTES

1. E. Weise, Die Staatsverträge des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen im 15. Jahrhundert (2 ed. Marburg 1970), 1, no. 15, p. 23. K. Heidenreich, Der Deutsche Orden in der Neumark (1402-1455), Einzelschriften der Historischen Kommission für die Provinz Brandenburg und die Reichshauptstadt Berlin 5 (Berlin 1932), p. 1.
2. Weise, Die Staatsverträge, 1, no. 17, p. 25.
3. Ibid., p. 26, c. 5.
4. Heidenreich, Der Deutsche Orden in der Neumark, p. 5f.
5. Weise, Die Staatsverträge, 1, no. 13, p. 22; Heidenreich, Der Deutsche Orden in der Neumark, p. 9.
6. Weise, Die Staatsverträge, 1, nos. 5, p. 15; 6,7, pp. 15-17. See also L. Arbusow, Grundriss der Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Kurlands (Riga 1908), p. 50 for the huge, cash-down purchase of the monastery of Dunamunde in 1305, and p. 58 for the purchase of the duchy of Estland from Waldemar IV in August 1346, and A. Klein, Die zentrale Finanzverwaltung im Deutschordensstaate Preussen am Anfang des XV. Jahrhunderts Staats- und sozialwissenschaftliche Forschungen (Leipzig 1904), 23, 2, pp. 118-119.
7. Weise, Die Staatsverträge, 1, no. 83, pp. 83-90; E. Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht im Ordenslande Preussen und das Mittelalterliche Europa, Veröffentlichungen der Niedersächsischen Archivverwaltung Heft 6 (Göttingen 1955), p. 72f; C. Krollmann, Politische Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen (Königsberg 1932), pp. 94-96; C. Krollmann, 'Der Deutsche Orden in Preussen' in Deutsche Staatenbildung und deutsche Kultur im Preussenlande, ed. Landeshauptmann der Provinz Ostpreussen (Königsberg, 1931), p. 76; E. Lampe, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte Heinrichs von Plauen 1411-1413' in Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins (1889), 26, p. 5f; P. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig bis 1626 (Danzig 1913), 1, p. 136; P.G. Thielen, Die Verwaltung des Ordensstaates Preussen vornehmlich im 15. Jahrhundert (Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart), ed. Johann Gottfried Herder Forschungsrat (Köln/Graz 1965), 2, p. 36f.
8. Weise, Die Staatsverträge, 1, no. 84, pp. 89-90. This document contradicts E. Mashke's assertion that von Plauen had no inkling of the trouble to come.

- See E. Mashcke, Der Deutsche Ordensstaat Gestalten seiner grossen Meister (Hamburg 1935), p. 96.
9. Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie, Veröffentlichungen der Niedersächsischen Archivverwaltung, ed. H. Koeppen (Göttingen 1960), 2, no. 72, pp. 145-149.
  10. E. Kutowski, 'Zur Geschichte der Söldner in den Heeren des Deutschordensstaates in Preussen bis zum 1. Thorner Frieden, in Oberländische Geschichtsblätter (Königsberg 1912), 3, xiv, pp. 422f.
  11. Ibid., p. 501. For the Order's losses at Tannenberg see Maschke, Der Deutsche Ordensstaat, p. 93.
  12. Ibid., p. 462.
  13. GSA OBA Reg. I. no. 1486. See also nos. 1417 and 1420.
  14. Scriptores rerum Prussicarum (SRP), ed. T. Hirsch, M. Töppen and E. Strehlke (Leipzig 1861-1874), 3, p. 324.
  15. GSA OBA Reg. I. no. 12823.
  16. Akten der Ständetage Preussen unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens (ASP), ed. M. Töppen (Leipzig 1878-1886), 1, no. 127, p. 168.
  17. Johannes Voigt, Geschichte Marienburgs, der Stadt und des Haupthauses des deutschen Ritter-Ordens in Preussen (Königsberg 1824), p. 327.
  18. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 13272.
  19. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 2112 for an example of a declaration of a feud signed by 45 mercenaries. See also E. Kutowski, 'Zur Geschichte der Söldner', p. 505.
  20. Ibid., p. 478.
  21. SRP, 3, p. 315; E. Maschke, Der Deutsche Ordensstaat, p. 92. For a good characterisation of Johann von Posilge's chronicle see Udo Arnold, 'Geschichtsschreibung im Preussenland bis zum Ausgang des 16. Jahrhunderts' in Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel-und Ostdeutschlands (1968), 17, pp. 84-85.
  22. SRP 3, p. 321. See also GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 13135 for examples of cattle-rustling in 1454.
  23. SRP 3, p. 327.

24. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1381.
25. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1433.
26. C. Krollmann, 'Die Bau und Kunstdenkmäler des Ordenslandes Preussen in den Schadenbüchern (1411/19)', Veröffentlichung der Stadtbibliothek Königsberg (Berlin 1919), pp. 3-52. I should like to thank Dr. Heide Wunder for finding and copying this important article for me in Lubeck. See also H. Gollub, 'Die Schadenbücher des Deutschen Ordens', Altpreussische Forschungen (1924), 2, pp. 143-144.
27. Ibid., p. 7.
28. Ibid., p. 8; see also p. 40.
29. Ibid., p. 26.
30. Ibid., p. 9.
31. Ibid., p. 10.
32. Ibid., p. 7; p. 40.
33. Ibid., p. 40.
34. Ibid., pp. 47-48.
35. Ibid., p. 51.
36. Ibid., p. 12.
37. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1392.
38. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1461.
39. Das Marienburger Konventsbuch der Jahre 1399-1412 ed. W. Zieseemer (Danzig 1913), p. viii. The figure for 1397 is given in Arthur Sielmann 'Die Reste des Marienburger Konventsbuches aus den Jahren 1395-1398' in Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins (1920), 60, pp. 67-73.
40. SRP 3, p. 320.
41. Zieseemer ed. Das Marienburger Konventsbuch, pp. 262-265.
42. Ibid., p. 264; p. 265.
43. Ibid., p. 265.
44. Ibid., p. 263.
45. Ibid., pp. 244-245.

46. Ibid., The rents for each village in the two years given appear as follows, Wernersdorf p. 224, p. 267; Montau p. 231, p. 269; Mierau p. 223, p. 269; Czans p. 226, p. 269; Prangow p. 228, p. 272; Furstenwerder p. 229, p. 273; Broske p. 226, p. 273; Orloff p. 230, p. 273; Schadewalt p. 223, p. 273; Nuwemonsterberg p. 230, p. 273; Nuwentych p. 230, p. 269; Wiedau p. 230, p. 273.
47. For examples see Das Marienburger Konventsbuch, pp. 266f.
48. Ibid., p. 267.
49. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1411. For further evidence of the poverty of the peasants in the commandery of Brandenburg see Das Grosse Ämterbuch des Deutschen Ordens, ed. W. Ziesemer (Wiesbaden 1968 Neudruck der Ausgabe 1921), pp. 218-219. This is a change of office inventory which records their outstanding dues. See also E. Wilke, 'Die Ursachen der preussischen Bauern-und Bürgerunruhen 1525 mit Studien zur ostpreussischen Agrargeschichte der Ordenszeit' in Altpreussische Forschungen (1930), 7, pp. 64-65.
50. SRP 3, p. 332.
51. ASP 1, no. 170, p. 211.
52. SRP 3, p. 356; T. Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens (Leipzig 1858), p. 42.
53. SRP 3, p. 360.
54. The Table is taken from F.L. Carsten, The Origins of Prussia (London 1954), p. 280.
55. SRP 3, p. 362f.
56. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1690; the number of horses kept by the brethren of the commandery of Christburg fell from 1,254 in 1404 to 275 in 1415. See M. Toppen, 'Topographisch-statistische Mitteilungen über die Domänen-Vorwerke des deutschen Ordens in Preussien' in Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1870), 7, p. 433. See also p. 439 for Strassburg; p. 450 for Rheden.
57. Hans Hubert Hofmann, Der Staat des Deutschmeisters, Studien zu einer Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation, Studien zur Bayerischen Verfassungs-und Sozialgeschichte (München 1964) 3, p. 75. On the bailiwicks see also the important study by R. ten Haaf, Deutschor-

- densstaat und Deutschordensballeien, Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft, ed. Heimpel, Hubatsch, Kaler and Schramm (2 ed. Göttingen 1954), in particular pp. 44f. on the financial relations between Prussia and the bailiwicks.
58. W. Abel, Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft vom frühen Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert, Deutsche Agrargeschichte, ed. G. Franz (Stuttgart 1967 2 ed.), p. 141.
  59. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1574.
  60. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1579.
  61. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1577.
  62. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1558.
  63. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1591.
  64. W. Abel, Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft, p. 137.
  65. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1696.
  66. Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren, 2, no. 71, pp. 144-145.
  67. W. Abel, Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft, pp. 110f; see also his Agricultural Fluctuations in Europe from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries, trans. by O. Ordish (London 1980), chs. 2, 3, pp. 35-99.
  68. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1723.
  69. C. Krollmann, Politische Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, p. 98.
  70. ASP 1, no. 112, pp. 158-160; K.E. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens unter dem Hochmeister Konrad von Erlichshausen 1441-1449, Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft, ed. Heimpel, Hubatsch, Kahler and Schramm (Göttingen 1953), Heft 10/11, pp. 77f. Max Töppen, 'Der Deutsche Ritterorden und die Stände Preussens' in Historische Zeitschrift (1881), 46, pp. 437f.
  71. ASP 1, no. 112, pp. 158-160, articles 3, p. 158; 18, p. 160; 9, p. 159; 12, p. 159; 13, p. 159.
  72. C. Krollmann, Politische Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, pp. 98f; P. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig, 1, pp. 132f and 3, Urkunden bis 1626, no.

- 121, pp. 83-85.
73. Ibid., p. 84; T. Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens (Leipzig 1858), p. 41.
74. ASP 1, no. 109, pp. 156-157.
75. E. Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht im Ordenslande Preussen, p. 65; C. Krollmann, 'Die Politik des Hochmeisters Heinrich von Plauen gegen die Grossen Städte' in Oberländische Geschichtsblätter (1910), Heft 12, vol. 3, pp. 88f; E. Lampe, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte Heinrichs von Plauen 1411-1413' in Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins (1889) 26, pp. 8f; K. Graske, 'Der Hochmeister Heinrich von Plauen im Konflikt mit den Städten des Ordenlandes Preussen' in Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins (1896), 35, p. 6f; J. Leinz, 'Die Ursachen des Abfalls Danzigs vom Deutschen Orden' in Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel-und Ostdeutschlands (1965), 13/14, pp. 1-59; P. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig, 1, pp. 137-138; ASP 1, no. 126, p. 167.
76. ASP 1, no. 126, p. 167.
77. C. Krollmann, 'Die Politik des Hochmeisters Heinrich von Plauen', especially pp. 81-82. See also Wolfgang Wippermann's excellent study of the Order's 'after image', Der Ordensstaat als Ideologie, Das Bild des Deutschen Ordens in der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung und Publizistik, Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin 24, Publikationen zur Geschichte der deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen 2, (Berlin 1979), pp. 164-165.
78. E. Maschke, Der Deutsche Ordensstaat, Gestalten seiner grossen Meister (Hamburg 1935), pp. 88-106 for the 'von Plauen was ahead of his time' approach, as well as for other concessions to the spirits of the 1930s. See also W. Wippermann, Der Ordensstaat als Ideologie, pp. 275-280. Although some of Maschke's essays were printed in the National Socialist Schulungsbrief, which served to give 'political education' to Hitler Youth, it should be mentioned that his writings drew on a historiographical tradition with a longer pedigree than the Nazi racial ideology. For a less positive evaluation of von Plauen see T. Hirsch, 'Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs', p. 43; p. 104.
79. Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren, 2, no. 72, p. 146.
80. SRP 3, p. 330; W. Nöbel, Michael Kuchmeister Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1414-1422, Quellen



- und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1969), 5, pp. 46f. See also C. Krollmann, Politische Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen, pp. 105-109 and his article on Kuchmeister in Altpreussische Biographie ed. C. Krollmann (Königsberg 1941), 1, pp. 372-373. See also his article in Altpreussische Biographie 2, pp. 504-505 on von Plauen.
81. W. Nöbel, Michael Kuchmeister, pp. 63-64.
  82. SRP 3, p. 334f.
  83. Ibid., p. 337. See also ASP 1, pp. 135-136 for similar criticisms of von Plauen made by Michael Kuchmeister.
  84. SRP 3, p. 334.
  85. ASP 1, no. 183, p. 231. See also no. 182, pp. 226-230.
  86. Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren 2, no. 87, p. 185.
  87. W. Nöbel, Michael Kuchmeister, pp. 67-68. On the fate of the brothers von Plauen see C. Krollmann's articles in Altpreussische Biographie, 2, pp. 504-506. The old Grand Master was sent to Lochstadt in 1422. Life was hard for the former Grand Master. On 24 August 1427 he wrote to Grand Master von Rusdorf complaining that the Marshal and his guests had eaten their way through the food stores and that he was reduced to eating 'black bread'. See GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 4810, and no. 5103 for complaints about money and the state of the buildings there. See also C.A. Lückerath, Paul von Rusdorf, Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1422-1441 (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens), ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1969) 15, p. 34.
  88. C. Krollmann, Politische Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, p. 127.
  89. S. Ekdahl, 'Der Krieg zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und Polen-Litauen im Jahre 1422' in Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (1964) 13, pp. 614-651; C. Lückerath, Paul von Rusdorf, pp. 31-42. See also Frank Milthaler, Die Grossgebietiger des Deutschen Ritterordens bis 1440, Schriften der Albertus-Universität, ed. Ostpreussischen Hochschulkreis Geisteswissenschaftliche Reihe (Königsberg 1940), pp. 72f. for the position of the Order Marshal in the war.
  90. S. Ekdahl, 'Der Krieg zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und Polen-Litauen', p. 651. Some indication of the

destruction can be gleaned from the fact that a special 'Landesordnung' was issued on 26 October 1423 which postponed payments of rent and debts on account of the ravages of war. See ASP 1, no. 327, pp. 412-414.

91. S. Ekdahl, 'Der Krieg zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und Polen-Litauen', pp. 619-621.
92. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3858.
93. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3859.
94. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3862.
95. C. Luckerath, Paul von Rusdorf, p. 37.
96. S. Ekdahl, 'Der Krieg zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und Polen-Litauen', p. 627.
97. Ibid., pp. 631-632; C. Luckerath, Paul von Rusdorf, pp. 38-39. A more desperate strategy was recommended to the Danzig house commander by a Danzig citizen. In his letter dated 7 August 1422 the House commander relayed the citizen's offer to leave a wagon load of poisoned bread and drink in the path of the oncoming Poles. See GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3861.
98. Ekdahl, 'Der Krieg zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und Polen-Pitauen', p. 633.
99. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3881.
100. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3887.
101. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3849.
102. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3857.
103. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3913
104. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3888.
105. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3865.
106. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3916.
107. C. Luckerath, Paul von Rusdorf, pp. 148f.
108. Ibid., p. 153. See also P. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig, pp. 178-180.
109. Das Grosse Zinsbuch des Deutschen Ritterordens, ed. P.G. Thielen (Marburg 1958), pp. xxx-xxxii. The data for my Table can be found on pp. 108-109 (Schlochau); p. 87 (Strassburg); pp. 101-102 (Graudenz);

pp. 89-90 (Gollub); pp. 104-105 (Tuchel); pp. 114-115 (Mewe). So as to make the Table more immediately comprehensible, I have omitted the information for occupied and deserted holdings of cottagers. A cottage is a descriptive term and lacks the precision of Hufe which is an area of measure.

110. Ibid., p. 101.
111. Ibid., p. 8.
112. Ibid., p. 119.
113. Ibid., p. 113. See also GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7308 for rent commutations in Pomerelia in April 1437.
114. ASP 1, no. 327, pp. 412-414.
115. Das Grosse Zinsbuch, p. 86.
116. Ibid., 102.
117. ASP 2, no. 397, p. 636. See also F.L. Carsten, The Origins of Prussia, p. 103.
118. ASP 1, no. 479, p. 615.
119. ASP 1, no. 540, pp. 692f.
120. Ibid., p. 693.
121. ASP 1, nos. 532, pp. 681-682; 533, p. 683; 534 pp. 683-684; 539, pp. 691-692; 541, p. 696. See also P. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig I, p. 181.
122. ASP
122. ASP 4, no. 23, p. 37. See also no. 17, p. 22 article 3.
123. Ibid., p. 38.
124. H. Koeppen, 'Der Fall des Gebietigers Johann Nothaft' in Acht Jahrhunderte Deutscher Orden (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens) ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1967), 1, pp. 153-164. The Beschwerdeschrift was edited by H. Koeppen as 'Eine Beschwerdeschrift der Altstadt Thorn gegen Ihren Komtur Johann Nothaft aus dem Jahre 1350' in Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg/Pr. (1960), 10, pp. 32-51, and in the Preussisches Urkundenbuch (Marburg 1960), 4, no. 549, pp. 495-500.
125. H. Koeppen, 'Der Fall', pp. 154-155.
126. Preussisches Urkundenbuch, 4, p. 498.

127. H. Koeppen, 'Der Fall', p. 160.
128. A. Semrau, 'Das Ordenshaus Thorn' in Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn (1939), 47, pp. 56-57. See also ASP 1, no. 283, p. 344.
129. ASP 4, no. 17, pp. 22-23.
130. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10207.
131. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11763. See also no. 11657 (1452), for lists of individual grievances against officers of the Order.
132. SRP 4, p. 459.
133. ASP 1, no. 382, p. 499 article 20.
134. ASP 4, no. 17, 9, this was presumably Heinrich von Mochendorf who was imprisoned for attempting to appeal to the Grand Master, see ASP 3, no. 317, pp. 587-588; 25.
135. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11032.
136. F.L. Carsten, 'The Origins of the Junkers', English Historical Review (1947), 243, pp. 158-160.
137. Ibid., p. 157 and note 3 on p. 157.
138. F.L. Carsten, The Origins of Prussia (Oxford 1954), p. 54.
139. H. Boockmann, 'Zu den Politischen Zielen des Deutschen Ordens in seiner Auseinandersetzung mit den Preussischen Ständen' Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands (1966), 15, p. 66f.
140. Carsten, Origins of Prussia, p. 54.
141. H. Plehn, 'Zur Geschichte der Agrarverfassung von Ost- und Westpreussen', Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen (1904), 17, pp. 66-74; H. Wunder, Siedlungs- und Bevölkerungsgeschichte der Komturei Christburg 13-16. Jahrhundert Marburger Ostforschungen, ed. H. Weiss (Wiesbaden 1968), 28, p. 118f.
142. Boockmann, 'Zu den Politischen Zielen', p. 65.
143. See ASP 1, no. 305, p. 386; no. 344, p. 440 and GSA OBA Reg. I, nos. 10273 and 10252.
144. On the Panenadel see T. Hirsch, 'Geschichte des Karthauser Kreises', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen

- Geschichtsvereins (1882), 5, p. 51f.
145. Boockmann, 'Zu den Politischen Zielen', 3, 4, p. 101.
146. Ibid., 7, 8, 9, 10.
147. Ibid., 13, p.
148. Ibid., 5, p.
149. ASP 2, no. 150, pp. 218-219, 12.
150. ASP 2, no. 387, p. 627. See also ASP 3, no. 68, p. 139 13 and 73, p. 146.
151. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10725
152. ASP 4, no. 17, p. 24 29.
153. Ibid., p. 25 32, see also articles 27, 28, 30, 46, 47, 48.
154. ASP 1, no. 487, p. 629; see also R. Wenskus, 'Der deutsche Orden und die nichtdeutsche Bevölkerung des Preussenlandes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siedlung', Die Deutsche Ostsiedlung des Mittelalters als Problem der Europäischen Geschichte Reichenen-Vorträge, ed. W. Schlesinger (Sigmaringen 1975), 3, p. 428.
155. ASP 4, no. 23, p. 42.
156. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11242.
157. Carsten, Origins of Prussia, p. 103f.
158. SRP 4, p. 459.
159. SRP 4, pp. 460-461.
160. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 4697.
161. ASP 1, no. 487, p. 629 article 35.
162. ASP 2, no. 243, p. 361.
163. ASP 4, no. 23, p. 40.
164. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11242.
165. Ibid.,

166. Witold Kula, An Economic Theory of the Feudal System, Towards a model of the Polish Economy 1500-1800, trans. L. Garner (London 1976), p. 47.
167. ASP 1, no. 391, pp. 519-520.
168. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 2358.
169. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12139.
170. G. Kisch, Das Fischereirecht im Deutschordensgebiet Beiträge zu seiner Geschichte Forschungen und Quellen zur Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte des Deutschordenslandes (Sigmaringen 1978), pp. 146f. H. Boockmann, 'Zu den Politischen Zielen', p. 76f.
171. ASP 2, no. 30, p. 33 article 3.
172. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10240.
173. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10685. For further disputes see nos. 10207, 11676, and 9415.
174. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11891.
175. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12546.
176. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11871.
177. ASP 4, no. 101, pp. 225-226.
178. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8158. These problems were not confined to the 15th century or to Prussia. In 1297 a civil war broke out in Livonia following a conflict over building work between the Order and the citizens of Riga. See L. Arbusow, Grundriss der Geschichte Liv- Est- und Kurlands (Riga 1908), pp. 48f.
179. ASP 2, no. 151, p. 221. For a brief but accurate statement of the townsmen's attitude to fortresses of the Order see R. Grieser, Hans von Baysen. Ein Staatsmann aus der Zeit des Niederganges der Ordensherrschaft in Preussen. Deutschland und der Osten 4, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen, ed. H. Aubin, A. Brackmann, M. Hein, J. Papritz, E. Randt, W. Recke, H. Ueberberger (Leipzig 1936), p. 99.
180. ASP 2, no. 342, p. 521f.
181. ASP 2, no. 376, pp. 607-608.
182. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11856. See also no. 11909 (1453), for further reference to the offending work on the crane.

183. ASP 2, no. 343, pp. 526-527.
184. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12317. See also no. 12293 (11 August 1453).
185. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12456.
186. ASP 4, no. 17, p. 26 article 39.
187. J. Leinz, 'Die Ursachen des Abfalls Danzig vom Deutschen Orden', Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel-und Ostdeutschlands (1965), 13/14, p. 13f.
188. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9259. See also ASP 2, no. 151 p. 221 for complaints about idle mill servants in Danzig.
189. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9320.
190. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9931.
191. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 11891.
192. J. Leinz, 'Die Ursachen', p. 14.
193. SRP 4, p. 485.
194. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10504. See also no. 11909 (March 1453), for the Order's case.
195. J. Leinz, 'Die Ursachen', p. 15.
196. GSA Ordensfoliant (OF), 17, pp. 795-796. See also pp. 797-798.
197. GSA OF 17, p. 833.
198. GSA OF 17, p. 803; pp. 833-834. See also GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10288 and OF 13, pp. 26-27 for further complaints to the King of Poland about the harassment of subjects of the Order by the potentates of Bromberg and Nakel.
199. GSA OF 17, pp. 816-817.
200. GSA OF 16, pp. 1172-1174.
201. GSA OF 16, p. 1174.
202. GSA OF 17, pp. 834-835.
203. GSA OF 17, p. 829. See also GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10289 (23 July 1450), for further examples of robbery committed in Poland.
204. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10688.

205. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10690. On the subject of foreigners in Poland in the Middle Ages, see, Benedykt Zientara, 'Foreigners in Poland in the 10th-15th Centuries: Their Role in the Opinion of Polish Medieval Community', Acta Poloniae Historica (1974), 29, pp. 5-28.
206. T. Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs, p. 179.
207. On these problems see F.L. Carsten, The Origins of Prussia, pp. 117-135; F. Vollbehr, Die Hölländer und die Deutsche Hanse Pfindstblätter des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins 21 (Lübeck 1930), pp. 3-87; K. Gorski, 'La Structure Économique et Sociale de l'Etat de l'Ordre Teutonique en Prusse (XIV-XV s.)' in Annali di storia economica e sociale (1968), p. 284f.; M. Biskup, 'Die Polnisch-Preussischen Handelsbeziehungen in der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts' in Hansische Studien, Gesammelte Beiträge Heinrich Sproemberg zum 70 Geburtstag, ed. G. Heitz and M. Unger (Berlin 1961), pp. 1-6; M. Malowist, 'L'expansion économique des Hollandais dans le bassin de la Baltique aux XIV<sup>e</sup> et XV<sup>e</sup> siècles' in Croissance et regression en Europe XIV<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles (Paris 1972), pp. 91-139; F. Renken, Der Handel der Königsberger Grossschäfferei des Deutschen Ordens mit Flandern um 1400, Abhandlungen zur Handels-und Seegeschichte im Auftrage des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins, ed. F. Rörig and W. Vogel (Weimar 1937), 5, pp. 9-11. W. Böhnke, 'Der Binnenhandel des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen und seine Beziehung zum Aussenhandel um 1400', Hansische Geschichtsblätter (1962), 80-81, pp. 26-95; on the Order's involvement in the grain trade see W. Naude, 'Die Getreidehandelspolitik des Deutschen Ordens' in Die Getreidehandelspolitik der europäischen Staaten vom 13 bis zum 18 Jh. als Einleitung in die preussischen Getreidehandelspolitik Acta Borussica (Berlin 1896), Abt. 2, R. 2 volume 1, pp. 252-278.
208. Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs, pp. 165-166.
209. Ibid., p. 169f; K.E. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, pp. 467-469. The sluices were built in 1418.
210. ASP 1, no. 399, p. 535. Hirsch's statement that only one sluice was brought to completion is contradicted by OF 15, p. 148v which mentions five. See also J. Leinz, 'Die Ursachen', p. 15f.
211. ASP 1, no. 403, p. 537; Hirsch Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs, p. 132.



212. ASP 2, no. 332, p. 506; 3, no. 58, p. 115.
213. OF 15, p. 147.
214. Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs, p. 27.
215. ASP 1, no. 34, pp. 55-56.
216. ASP 1, no. 69, pp. 101-102.
217. ASP 1, no. 80, pp. 111-113; Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs, pp. 40-41; Leinz, 'Die Ursachen', p. 16.
218. ASP 1, p. 7.
219. Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs, p. 50.
220. von Erlichshausen's redivision of the tax can be found in ASP 2, no. 349, pp. 547-548. For a very detailed discussion of his negotiations with the Estates concerning the Pfundzoll see K.E. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, pp. 83-95. The first Pfundmeister, Tyle Lorch was appointed in 1400 see P. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig 1, p. 101.
221. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7906.
222. Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs, p. 213.
223. ASP 1, no. 436, p. 577.
224. ASP 2, no. 84, p. 135.
225. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig 1, p. 154 note 2.
226. Naude, 'Die Getreidehandelspolitik des Deutschen Ordens', p. 263.
227. Ibid., p. 263; Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs, p. 36.
228. Gorski, 'La structure économique', p. 285. See also ASP 1, nos. 313, p. 395; 324, p. 408; 487, p. 626 for complaints concerning these letters of exemption. See also M. Töppen, 'Der Deutsche Ritterorden und die Stände Preussens', Historische Zeitschrift (1881), 46, p. 443.
229. ASP 1, no. 82, p. 117; 2, no. 397, p. 635 article 4. For further complaints concerning trading

activity and brewing by Order members see ASP 4, no. 23, p. 40.

230. ASP 1, no. 382, p. 499 article 22.
231. ASP 2, no. 67, p. 106.
232. ASP 3, no. 68, p. 138 article 8.
233. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9102.
234. C. Krollmann, 'Die Politik des Hochmeisters Heinrich von Plauen', p. 86; K. Graske, 'Der Hochmeister Heinrich von Plauen im Konflikt mit den Städten', p. 9; J. Leinz, 'Die Ursachen', p. 7f.
235. H. Wermbter, 'Die Verfassung der Städte im Ordensland Preussen', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins (1884), 13, p. 15.
236. J. Leinz, 'Die Ursachen', p. 7.
237. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1435.
238. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 1435.
239. Leinz, 'Die Ursachen', p. 7 refers to a judgement of the Magdeburger Schöppenstuhl in that year which went against seigneurial interference in urban elections.
240. C. Krollmann, 'Die Politik des Hochmeisters Heinrich von Plauen', p. 90.
241. Leinz, 'Die Ursachen', p. 8.
242. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig 1, p. 142.
243. K. Graske, 'Der Hochmeister Heinrich von Plauen im Konflikt mit den Städten', p. 14.
244. ASP 4, no. 17, p. 21 article 2; p. 22 article 11.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISORDER IN THE ORDER

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISORDER IN THE ORDER

The purposes of this chapter are to consider the major criticisms made by contemporaries about the internal administration of the Order, and to analyse the instruments of control over the brethren available to both the Grand Master and the local officers and demonstrate the way in which the brethren formulated both complaints and their own reform programmes independently of their superiors, amounting in one case to rebellion against the Grand Master. In the second section further blemishes in the Order's discipline are revealed.

#### I. The Criticisms

The Order's critics discerned two serious flaws in the corporation. First, the officers had lost control of the brethren who had consequently abandoned the simplicities of the Rule in favour of a hedonistic and money-seeking existence. Secondly, the critics said that the Order was being torn apart by rivalries between regional factions. The first criticism can be seen in the admonitory tract entitled 'Die Ermahnung des Carthäusers'.<sup>1</sup> Written sometime between 1426 and 1427, by a Carthusian monk probably from the priory at Marienparadies in Pomerelia, the tract is one of several

surviving responses to an initiative on the part of von Rusdorf in which the Grand Master had sought to discover both the causes of the evils besetting Prussia and ways to set matters right.<sup>2</sup>

The Carthusian used sixty or so biblical figures and a scattering of allusions to sacred and secular history to support his contention that because the brothers no longer observe their Rule, the promised land (eyn gelobetis lant), of Prussia had fallen, by default so to speak, into the deleterious condition which our author then describes. Because those who did not observe the Rule were not punished by their superiors, a general breakdown had occurred within the Order.<sup>3</sup> So far from spending the days and nights praising the Lord, the brothers filled in the time with rowdy feasting. The three fundamental vows were disregarded and the offices of the day and night were not allowed to impinge upon the carousing in the cellars and chambers. As soon as the Sunday sermon had begun, the 'heren' would bolt for the doors. Indeed, should the life conventual become too onerous for them, the brothers could always buy themselves a quiet spot in 'dy wiltnisse', a tyranny all for oneself founded upon the uncustomary labours of the Prussian peasantry. Since both offices and justice were being exploited for personal gain, there was widespread insecurity in the law and a consequent collapse of order, morals and orthodoxy in Prussian society at large.

This tract was not the work of some ascetic

pessimist. The 'Admonition' was a response to Rusdorf's initiative which is spoken of approvingly; it was addressed to the Grand Master, and it contains solutions, however nebulous, to the problems which the author describes. Secondly, there are no documented reasons why a Pomerelian Carthusian should be ill-disposed towards the German Order. The house at Marienparadies, founded in 1381, had received very extensive endowments of land and lakes both from successive Grands Masters and well-to-do Danzig merchants.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, relations between the two Orders were good, or at least a great deal better than relations between the German Order and the Cistercians at Oliva or the Premonstratensians at Zuckau. In political terms, the Carthusians were loyal to the German Order. During the Thirteen Years War (1454-66), one prior, Martin Schnelle, went so far as to involve himself in a conspiracy to surrender Danzig to the Knights.<sup>5</sup>

The Order's critics said that the brethren were not only disorderly but divided amongst themselves. One, undoubtedly hostile, Danzig chronicler wrote

In 1439 the lords of the Order were greatly at odds with each other and disunited, namely the chapters and officers amongst themselves; this became known throughout the land of Prussia, and elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

He thought that the admission to the Order of too many southerners - Swabians, Bavarians and Franconians - during Kuchmeister's mastership was at the root of the problem. All the major officers were southerners:

brothers from the other 'tongues' were put out to grass in the remoter commanderies. New and 'damnable' (vorfluchte), vices such as greed, arrogance and unchastity characterised the new men who not only traded with the English but craftily held up the Danzig ships until their own were reported to be in the Sound.<sup>7</sup> The author of Die Danziger Chronik vom Bunde also put the responsibility for disunity at the feet of the arrogant southerners.<sup>8</sup> A warning note had appeared outside Hochmeister Rusdorf's chamber. It said ominously

Das magk nymant eyn gebittiger seynn.  
Her sey den Beyer, Swobe, adder  
Franckeleynn.<sup>9</sup>

Terrified for his life following a coup d'etat in the Marienburg, Rusdorf had fled over the ice on a sleigh to Danzig.

A less fanciful account of the disorders was given by the successive continuators of the Ältere Hochmeisterchronik.<sup>10</sup> The second continuator noted

He (Rusdorf) had some 11 marshals in 12 years, that was very damaging to the Order. The officers (amptleute), whom his predecessors had appointed, he dismissed and appointed his compatriots (lantleute), to the offices, who were new to the country. The offices were much ruined by them.

Also obedience fell off greatly in his time, no one took much notice of his letters and commands ... The Königsberg Chapter deposed the Marshal from office, the Chapter at Thorn did likewise with their commander without the knowledge of the Master.<sup>11</sup>

His more cryptic successor wrote

... he (Rusdorf) was old and the officers were disunited, each tongue (geczone), wanted to push forward its own (dy seynen vorczyen), thus the Rhinelander's theirs; Franconians, Swabians and Bavarians theirs. Since at the time the master 'Pawl' was a Rhinelander, they deposed him and (sent him) to Rastenburg.<sup>12</sup>

All were agreed, friend and foe alike, that the Order had undergone a disruptive power struggle. As we have seen, the chroniclers had their own more or less parti pris explanations of its causes. All were agreed too that the rivalry of the 'tongues' had had a major part to play.

## II. Control

The Grand Master had two important formal means at his disposal to ensure that the Statutes were being observed and to keep the latter in step with a changing reality: the Visitation and legislation.

The Visitation was designed for the control of material and moral standards within the Order's houses. Several sources enable one to establish the procedure adopted and a few give us the results. For example, in 1434, Rusdorf by a letter of commission (Machtbrief) empowered Ludwig von Landsee, the commander in Christburg, and Bruno, a priest-brother from the Danzig commandery, to visit Order houses with a view to establishing debt, damage and crimes. The officers



and brethren affected were told to receive the two in a manner 'subject, willing and obedient'.<sup>13</sup> A second letter was drafted to be sent to certain commanders informing them that the visitors were going to start work at Elbing, moving on to Balga, Brandenburg and Königsberg. The commanders and their subordinates were to state in writing the position regarding rents, occupied and vacant lands, mills and inns, with nothing omitted (keyne do von usgesundirt).<sup>14</sup>

Two surviving visitation reports from the 1440's enable one to follow the progress of two other Order visitor's through the Culmerland on two separate occasions.<sup>15</sup> The reports deal with the same ten houses, which for statistical purposes, could be called a fair cross section in terms of their strategic importance, size and wealth. According to their instructions, the two visitors were to check whether what was wrong in previous years had been put right, whether work or reform was in progress and to make their own investigations. These men did all three.

Most of the houses visited were in a tumble-down condition or had building work in progress. In one case, the house at Thorn, this can probably be attributed to natural catastrophe. In 1420 the Thorn house-commander informed his superior Ulrich Zenger that a fire had destroyed large parts of the house as well as Zenger's 'beaverskin', the scribe's bedding and the cellar-master's stores of fat and candle grease.<sup>16</sup>

For the most part, the visitors meticulously recorded the results of the ravages of time, damp, subsidence and war. The Vogt in Brathean had improved his chambers and some of the out-buildings, but he would not start work on the roof without help from his superiors. However, he promised to underpin the collapsing mill wall with timber. At Rheden, the commander had covered three-quarters of the roof on the right wing of the house. The roof over the entrance was still in a poor state (gancz bosse am dach), so he promised to see to it before the onset of winter.

In moral terms the picture was not quite so bleak as the Carthusian had painted it. In Thorn, there were conditions approaching his general image of life in an Order commandery, but there were also positive factors present to qualify it. On the first visit, it was discovered that there was no reading at table: by the second this had been corrected. However, the visitors warned the commander that the priest - and knight-brothers should arrive punctually for matins whether or not they were going to sing. The knight-brothers said that they were not going to unless they were issued with their matin furs, mantles and shoes. Sensing some internal acrimony, the visitors evidently encouraged the knight-brothers to go on with their complaints: their horses were not receiving adequate fodder and strays were not being quickly replaced. Word had reached the visitors that some brothers were in the habit of slinking off to the wine-cellars in the town. Admonished fraternally,

and threatened with the wrath of the house-commander they replied facetiously, 'if he says anything to us, we'll answer him twice'. But one must not become dazzled by these signs of uppishness, the choir was full, all the services excluding the disputed matins were held and they read now at table.

At Strasburg, the brothers were said to go for walks after compline dressed in short cloaks. One priest-brother called Kirstan, clearly a name to be remembered, read the night offices; his colleague, who was nameless, protested that he would join Kirstan but he had a sore head (eyn krank houbet).<sup>17</sup> Again there was the demand for 'mettenpelcz'.

In general, only half the services were properly held with most difficulties occurring at night. Invariably this was due to a shortage of personnel or unpunctuality on the part of the priest-brothers, with a consequent tendency to read rather than sing the services. The brothers at Rheden presented the visitors with a list (czedel), of complaints, whose contents were not particularised. By probably no more than coincidence, the only known surviving complaints list also comes from the Rheden Chapter. Since it carries no date it is not possible to say whether it is the list mentioned in the visitation reports.<sup>18</sup> The Chapter presented the commander with some twenty articles of complaint. Again the brothers felt ill-served in the way of clothing and footwear. They considered themselves entitled to 'Chapter furs' by virtue of custom and because everyone

else appeared to have them (nach alder gewonheit als man in andern Covent czu halden). The food was badly cooked and spiced with the wrong herbs. There had been a too liberal application of saffron. Moreover, the meat and fish were cut up and served in such miserly portions that the brothers could spare nothing by way of alms. The Refectory (Rempthur), and passages stank of dogs; the passages should be lit at night 'according to our Order book and Rule'. There should be some accurate way of telling the time so that services could be held punctually. Above all, the brothers wanted to be waited on. Someone to make the beds; a boy to accompany them on journeys; washerwomen (wesscheryn) who did not haggle about wages, and a tailor (sneider) to repair their old clothes 'umbe unser gelt'. Finally, they wanted their bathhouse heated every eighth day and a window installed in it. These were the sort of demands which one knows were made of the visitors - a bathhouse at Golaw, better food at Aldenhaus.

One is impressed with the technical efficiency of the Order visitors. As one knows from a law of Winrich von Kniprode, the visitors had sworn to take no heed of threats or a brother's status. They were also not to accept gifts from the visited.<sup>19</sup> They knew when they were being lied to. On the first visit to Graudenz, they felt dissatisfied with the account of services given them by the priest-brothers, and on the second visit they were still not convinced that the brothers were getting up for the night office. They

noted which houses were without a copy of the Rule, a point they were interested in ascertaining since in 1442 Conrad von Erlichshausen had issued an important revised edition.<sup>20</sup> They gave praise where praise was due and, at least in Strasburg, they tried to involve the knight-brothers in the disciplining of the wayward priest-brothers. They wanted to know the exact position regarding the grain which the Hochmeister had stored up in these frontier commanderies. One knows from other sources that the visitors were equipped with operational guidelines. They were given lists containing the numbers of men and the amounts of grain - with due account taken of regional variations - which Marienburg expected them to find. Sections of legislation, old and new, were grouped under various headings, for example, 'how the officers shall maintain their houses' or 'how one shall maintain the infirmary'.<sup>21</sup>

The Grand Master could also issue directives to tighten up observation of the Rule and to bring the latter into line with a changing reality. Both processes can be seen in the forty-nine articles issued by Paul von Rusdorf in December 1427 with the advice of his immediate subordinates on the officers council (Gebietigerrat).<sup>22</sup> According to the accompanying letter sent to the commanders, the articles were to be copied into 'your Order book', and read out at regular intervals to the brothers assembled in Chapter.<sup>23</sup> The first part of this command was carried out: both the letter and the articles were copied into an early fifteenth century

rent book from the commandery of Elbing.<sup>24</sup>

The articles were concerned with two problems. First, how to adapt the stark simplicities of the Rule to the changing tastes and expectations of the Order members. Secondly, to both clarify and remind brothers of the existence of regulations in force. The first process can be seen quite clearly in the articles which sought to eradicate a few of life's consolations. For example, they prohibit the wearing of fashionably cut versions of the habit or expensive accessories such as belts, knives and purses embellished with silver, or the possession of serving boys or dogs.<sup>25</sup> These attempts to cut out what either consciously or unconsciously gave contours to a brother's individuality or his social status were not new and were not confined to the German Order.<sup>26</sup> The laws of Heinrich Dusemer (1345-51), had tried to regulate the tightness and colour of clothing and had stipulated baldly, that no brother 'shall carry a purse'.<sup>27</sup> By the late 1420's, as we have seen, purses were not at issue in themselves, but smart silver ones were. Earlier laws were articulated and defined. For example, whereas Winrich von Kniprode (1351-82) merely stated that one should be merciful in the courts, and that one should not trouble the people with excessive work, his fifteenth-century successor, repeating these admirable sentiments, went on to articulate them. Appellants to the Grand Master were not to be beaten or thrown into the tower; the brothers were not to exact

uncustomary labour or carrying services, and were not to extort rents before the rent days stipulated in the charters.<sup>28</sup>

The purely administrative articles bring us quite close to the preoccupations of the Carthusian. Transfers within the Order had to take place with the Hochmeister's knowledge and those given remote postings were to have experienced the conventional life for a minimum of one year. They were not to have been in the Order for too short a time. Article 43 was the first attempt to specify the contents of the change of office inventories which had to be produced by Order officers before they departed for their new post or returned to the ranks. Every officer had to answer for the number of land units, mills and inns occupied or vacant and to specify in writing both this information and the rents and fruits of his office. Finally, in article 45, sanctions had been developed to counter the ignorance of the fundamental Christian formulae so bemoaned by the Carthusian. In the course of their confession, the brothers were to be challenged on their knowledge of prayers. Those who found themselves in difficulties were to be given a set time in which to learn some, in the course of which they were to be denied the Sacrament. The incorrigible were to be brought to the attention of their commanders. Meals were to be consumed in a modest, noiseless manner and were to be taken collectively: three articles sought to control the brothers' conviviality

both in their own cellars and at the various rural feasts and inns.

Both methods of control were capable of a more sudden, unexpected application. For example, to pursue the clothing theme for a moment, Rusdorf issued a seven line directive telling those responsible for the issue of clothing, the quartermasters, to issue the brethren with the standard garb and not with the new cut (nuwe snitte), which some tailors were producing. Only what had the approval of 'Order custom' should be issued.<sup>29</sup>

The visitation could also be used on a more ad hoc basis. Thus, in September 1428 a dispute arose in Schwetz of such serious proportions that the commander of nearby Graudenz was called in to investigate.<sup>30</sup> Upon arrival, the commander, Bohemund Brendel, interviewed four brothers and then the entire Chapter. Following a trip to the town, a spell in the kitchen and the cellar-master's chambers, the old house-commander Spornekel had begun throwing sticks into the refectory. Ignoring the shouts of brother Willemartin, Spornekel had returned to the cellar-master. Tired of the latter, Spornekel had left, got dressed for matins and had joined the rest in church. He could not remember anymore, since, upon leaving, he had been struck to the ground, where he lay 'like a dead man' (wie eyn toder mensche). His alleged assailant, Willemertin, had another version of events. Relations between him and the victim had been bad for a long time; once, the house-commander had



knocked him over on a bridge, on another occasion he had made a lunge at him with a knife over the table. On the evening in question the two had exchanged hard words and eventually blows in the cellar-master's chamber. After matins, Spornekel had overtaken Willemertin and wounded him twice, before Willemertin had managed to disarm him. Willemertin added, almost modestly, that he 'took the house-commanders knife and gave him a slash or two'. The cellar-master supplied information about Spornekel's drunken and violent behaviour. He also said that he had been woken by the whispers in his ear of Spornekel's servant. Running outside, he had found the house-commander bleeding on the ground and a blood-bespattered Willemertin standing over him. The rest of the Chapter said, probably wisely, that they did not know what had happened since they were all asleep.<sup>31</sup> Boredom, heavy drinking, trivial pranks, tough talk, violence and cliquishness: - these were some aspects of life in the barracks.

Control over the brethren in the commanderies was exercised by the commanders and house-commanders. However, and we shall see this point time and again, there was also regular contact between them and the Grand Master with regard to even the most humble matters. Thus, on 7 November 1448 the house-commander in Balga wrote to the Grand Master concerning a brother who had requested permission to travel to Insterburg, 'which permission I will not give him without your Grace's others'.<sup>32</sup>

These contacts also took place when transfers were being mooted. But briefly, transfers were effected either directly on the initiative of the Grand Master or, following a request to the latter on the part of a commander. Both procedures can be seen in a letter from the Marshal dated 1 October 1441<sup>33</sup>

As your Grace has written to us concerning the priest-brother from Insterburg who shall be sent to the Chapter at Ragnit etc. The priest-brother from Rheden who newly entered the choir at Königsberg has a very weak voice (gar swach bestymmet), and is not suited to the choir. We did not know that, and as your Grace yourself can well recognise, it is necessary to have priest-brothers with good voices in the choir at Königsberg. Therefore, dear lord Master, if it is in accordance with your will we will send the same priest-brother who has come from Rheden to Königsberg, to Insterburg, and your Grace may deign to choose another who is able, and of good voice, to send to our choir at Königsberg.

Sometimes inquiries were made about the brother being transferred. In a letter dated 21 November 1448, the Marshal wrote to the Grand Master concerning the Shoemaster at Brandenburg whom he wanted to have at Königsberg.<sup>34</sup> He had heard favourable reports about him: he was 'able and good at his work' and also 'clever with his hands' (habe ouch wol in den honden). However, the Shoemaster was not keen to move. On the 26 November the commander in Brandenburg wrote to the Grosskomtur on his behalf, enclosing a letter from the Shoemaster.<sup>35</sup> The Shoemaster explained that he had the gout and had been ill for over a year. Still poorly, he recommended a certain Jacob at Ragnit, 'he is a healthy man, God knows well that I am not up to it'.<sup>36</sup>

The gouty Shoemaster apart, and he had to pull strings by stirring the hearts of the mighty, it is doubtful whether the wishes of the brother concerned were taken into account when transfers were under consideration. The commanders were more concerned with finding replacements to fill the gaps left by transfers<sup>37</sup> or with securing the consent of the commander about to lose a brother to the projected move. Thus on 22 November 1448, the commander in Christburg wrote to the Grand Master requesting a brother from Brandenburg and concluded with the remark 'I hope the commander from Brandenburg will also give his assent to this'.<sup>38</sup> The commanders apart, it must nevertheless have been a frustrating business to leave Rheden for the Königsberg choir merely to be arbitrarily despatched to lonely Insterburg on account of one's vocal shortcomings.

The commanders had a complex judicial and penal system at their disposal to ensure obedience and to break the wilfully disobedient. Two notions governed the administration of Justice to the lay brothers of the Order. One, judgement in Chapter and two, a graded system of punishments.<sup>39</sup> In theory, the simplest errors were corrected by the fraternal admonition. If two or more brothers were together, and one was sinful, the other would calmly and fraternally admonish him. Should the brother fail to take notice of this admonition or have committed a sin to the detriment of his soul or the honour of the Order, he was told to bring his misdeeds

to the attention of his superiors and the Chapter as a whole. Failure to do so, in other words, if he had to be accused, increased the severity of the punishment.<sup>40</sup> Accusations could only be made before the Chapter. If it could be proved that an accusation was false or was the result of malice on the part of the accuser, then the latter would suffer the punishment which would have been incurred by the accused.<sup>41</sup>

The judgement lay in the hands of the Chapter as a whole, a reflection of the brothers consciousness of their estate,<sup>42</sup> which, following the hearing of witnesses, reached a verdict by either majority vote or according to what the 'better part' thought. Discussion had also taken place on where the sin ranked in the four grades of sinfulness and in what permutations the various punishments to hand were to be applied. If the matter was trivial, the guilty would be referred to his confessor. If it was not, then the accused, who had been sent out during these deliberations, returned and was asked, 'Brother, will you be obedient?'. Following the answer 'ia', which seems to have been the only possible one, the punishment was announced by the most senior brother present.

The punishments were very complicated. They were also, as G. Schmidt has shown, similar to what one finds in other religious Orders in terms of their content and purpose.<sup>43</sup> They involved combinations of dietary deprivation, alterations of the habit, physical pain, confinement and in extreme cases expulsion.<sup>44</sup> All of the punishments could be more or less humiliating.

Certain dishes could be withheld at mealtimes, or one could be made to consume a suitably demeaning fare in the company of the servants. The highly ritualised corporal punishment, 'iuste', could be carried out in Chapter or as a part of the Sunday High Mass, with the brothers standing until the sentence had been carried out. The most degrading penalty was called the 'iarbusse', which involved a year spent labouring with prisoners of war, taking meals 'on the ground', on the four days that the brother concerned received more than bread and water, the wearing of a habit without the cross, and finally, the Sunday corporal punishment.<sup>45</sup> Should there be recidivists, and there were, the Order commander could resort to irons and the dungeon.

The recitation of these procedures and penalties does not tell us very much about their use in practice or whether or not they worked.

In theory, the harshness of the Order administration of justice should have been mitigated by the brothers right to both appeal and complain to the Grand Master as stated unequivocally in the ninth of Rusdorf's articles.<sup>46</sup> However, this reveals its own limitations. The complaining brother was to bring his problems to his commander's attention and failing that to the Grand Master. An example of how this did not work was brought to Rusdorf's attention in 1431 by the Order's senior representative in Rome, Kaspar Wandofen. A brother called Hans Ochse had been in the Order for twenty years.<sup>47</sup>

He had taken the desperate step of fleeing to Rome because of the circumstances conspiring against him in the commandery of Osterode. Three of his fellows, including the house-commander Jorge Gros, had denounced him 'concerning a woman' to the commander Wolf von Saunssheim, who had developed an ill-will towards him. The trio had sent a messenger boy to Ochsse, who for reasons not explained, so annoyed the brother that 'he forgot himself a little and hit him'. For this Ochsse had spent twenty-two weeks in the tower. Upon his release, the three had sent a cellar-servant to him, who again unaccountably, was wounded. Fleeing, in his own words, 'for fear that he would be in the tower for ever', he was prepared to be punished by the Grand Master, but would on no account return to Prussia. He had tried to appeal to the Grand Master from Osterode but his commander 'would not let him'. Wandofen had by the time of writing (12 February) sent Ochsse to the provincial commander in Naples, with a letter instructing the latter to act mercifully and on no account to beat or imprison the offender. However, the provincial commander, Nicolaus Riuntinger (1425-32), was quick to wash his hands of the troublesome brother. On 24 July he wrote to Wandofen asking him 'for friendship's sake' to take Ochsse away from him.<sup>48</sup> By 20 August this had taken place, since Wandofen wrote on that day to the Grand Master announcing the arrival in Rome of Ochsse, clad in a white mantle, without the cross, and bearing a letter from Riuntinger.<sup>49</sup> The latter explained that he

could not do anything with the Prussian (her hette mit den Prussen nichtes czu schaffen). Ochsse, in the meantime, repeated his concern that if he went back to Prussia, he would not be able to appeal to the Grand Master. Wandofen, while remarking that such 'obirtreter unsers ordens' should be punished as an example to others, said that no house in Germany or elsewhere would take in such wayward individuals and that he did not know what to do should such cases occur in the future.<sup>50</sup> By Christmas, Ochsse, who was clearly not the stuff that saints are said to be made of, was off once again on his travels, this time to adorn the Order baliwick of Bozen.<sup>51</sup> He was now ready to return to Prussia to be punished by the Grand Master, but was still anxious that the commander in Osterode would manage to interfere with the course of justice.

Even when one could find a path past the ill will of the commanders, there was no guarantee of help from the Grand Master. The more cunning officer would try to take the edge off the complaint before it had actually been lodged. Thus, Heinrich von Richtenberg, promising in January 1445 to account with the Tressler through the agency of his cellar-master, continued, 'if my cellar-master should come to your Grace with much idle gossip, complaining about me more than the truth warrants, I ask your Grace not to take the matter to heart, but to let it rest until I am able to speak to your Grace in person'.<sup>52</sup> Having got the complaint through to Marienburg, there was no guarantee of a

satisfactory or speedy answer. The delays could push the brother, even when he had done no wrong, into the paths of disobedience. Thus, in October 1445, the Königsberg commander Kilian von Exdorf reminded the Grand Master of the tiresome existence of a brother called 'Feylscher' from Ragnit, who had, one infers, asked the Grand Master for permission to leave the Order.<sup>53</sup> It was essential to do this since those who departed without the permission fell within the ambit of the third grade sins and would receive the 'iarbusse'. The procedure was clearly slow, or at any rate 'Feylscher' thought so. According to Exdorf, writing in a tone of horrified fascination, 'Feylscher' was threatening that if 'he did not get an answer from your Grace to-day, he would pull his mantle over his ears and would see what your Grace would do about it'. His additional remarks propelled him through a few more regulations rather in the way that a hurdler, having knocked down one obstacle, finds it difficult to regain his composure. The brother 'used many wild words which none of us know how to write to your Grace'. Exdorf had written to the Ragnit house-commander recommending that the brother be admonished for his disobedience and punished for his spoken extravagances. Failing this, he was to be guarded until either the Grand Master or Exdorf wrote with instructions on the next step.

A further option, open to the commanders, once everything else had failed was to make the deviant Order brother someone else's problem. We have seen this taking



place in the case of Hans Ochsse discussed above. It was also a method of punishment that was arbitrary and without statutory foundation and one which, along with arbitrary transfers in general, was specifically condemned by the rebel Chapters in 1440.

Posting men far away was possible in a corporation with outposts scattered from Lake Peipus to Apulia. Thus, the mad or the bad were shunted backwards and forwards in an attempt to put them where they could do least harm. In the case of the Order bailiwicks in the Reich, this involved sending the miscreants East.<sup>54</sup> The reasons for this sort of transfer can be seen in a letter dated 28 December 1447 from the Grand Master to the Vogt in the Neumark, Georg von Egloffstein.<sup>55</sup> The adjutant (Kompan) of the castellan in Kústrin had been running about hither and thither in the town and, moreover, was both disobedient and unwilling towards the castellan. The Grand Master, 'greatly amazed' at this behaviour, wrote to the Vogt instructing him to admonish the Kompan in the presence of the castellan, but, failing that, the Grand Master continued, 'we will send him to Livonia or Ragnit'.

In Prussia, the deviant brother could either be isolated in a remote spot or transferred to either the Reich or Livonia. Thus, on 10 July 1445, the Vogt in the Neumark, who had been called in to assess the problem, wrote to Conrad von Erlichshausen concerning a brother in Schlochau called Jorgen Hettzelstorfer who

was insane, or as the Vogt euphemistically expressed it, 'nicht wol bei seinen synnen ist'.<sup>56</sup> The Vogt explained to the Grand Master that the main road to southern Germany ran through the commandery and that the presence of a mad man would make an unfavourable impression upon the Bavarians and Swabians, passing through. Since the insanity was liable to deepen, the Vogt recommended an immediate transfer. He did not mind where to, provided that the place selected was as far as possible from that particular frontier.

Sometimes, the transfer request reveals an initiative on the part of a Chapter rather than the house officers. In March 1431, for example, the commander in Königsberg wrote to Rusdorf about a brother Heinrich Lengefelt, who, the commander regretfully pointed out, had been placed by the Grand Master in the Königsberg commandery.<sup>57</sup> The older brothers had told the commander that Lengefelt's sins were so enormous that the brothers were refusing to have anything to do with him. The commander added that 'your Grace may well recognise how hard it is to live with such disorderly people'. Since the Chapter, 'simply will not tolerate him', the house-commander had asked Lengefelt whether he was prepared to leave Prussia. He had said that he was. The commander, who was waiting for an answer from the Grand Master, added, probably fearing that he would be stuck with Jurgen Lengefelt indefinitely, that the latter was an able young man.

This method of disposing of the troublesome or the troublesomely eccentric worked, provided the offender had not acquired too much notoriety on his travels from one commandery to another. In December 1437 the commander in Osterode wrote to Rusdorf accepting a brother from Serbia, but firmly resisting the attempts of his colleague in nearby Strassburg to palm him off with a certain Johan von der Heyde 'eyn unendelich mensche' who, useless and inefficient, had been shuffled from one commandery to another 'in a very short time'.<sup>58</sup> The commander, Wolf von Saunssheim, said that he had more than enough like Johan already, and in any case, with twenty-eight brothers, he felt that his house was full. Should the Grand Master insist upon sending him someone, it should be a brother capable of holding office, since despite the twenty-eight, Saunssheim could not rely upon any of them.

In addition to this arbitrary use of transfers, Justice was also perverted in the sense that there was clearly one law for the powerful and one law for the rest. For example, in the late 1440's the Vogt in Brathean, Heidischen von Milen was involved in a case of colossal corruption, in so far as he was alleged to have appropriated the treasure of the deceased Paul von Rusdorf for his own use. The case became known to the Gebietiger through the culprit's boasts about his new found affluence.<sup>59</sup> A number of witnesses were questioned. The Vogt in Soldau, 'bit Herman', said that Heidischen had grabbed him by the upper arm and boasted that

he had dug his own arm that deep into a box full of money 'and had tossed the coins up and down'. The Vogt had also employed the services of a gold-smith to make 'fifteen golden rings' and to melt down other costly items. The goldsmith had also seen the Vogt take a sack 'hock und langk mit golde' out of a drawer. A surprise visit to the Vogt from the Tressler and the commander of Osterode resulted. They asked him for the keys to a box, opened it and found a sack. The commander of Osterode pulled out handfuls of coin which amounted to 385 nobles. The Vogt claimed that this represented the profit on a grain transaction which had had the Grand Master's consent. He was not forthcoming on how a sapphire and a gold-ring with a diamond 'which the old Master used to wear' had got there. The Vogt received several further visits from a number of senior officers acting on the Grand Master's orders. On two occasions they declared that he would be given 'an honourable consideration' from the money in question, and a suitable office for life. Despite these enticements - which of course were unstatutory - he persisted in his story. Since sums of the order of 20,000 nobles were said to be still in his possession, accusations were made against him. In the Spring of 1447 he was sentenced to a heavy term of imprisonment by a Chapter at Marienberg. By the Autumn of the same year, following interventions on his behalf by his Middle Rhenish relations with dignatories such as the archbishops of Cologne and Trier and several Counts, he had been released from prison.<sup>60</sup>

His name appears in a list of the brethren in the commandery of Brandenburg drawn up in late September 1447.<sup>61</sup>

The Order also applied another morality in the interests of the State. For although the Order was ruthless in its petty-minded pursuit of deviant brothers such as Hans Ochse, it was contrastingly elastic in its tolerance of its officers tyrannical abuse of others. At one end of the spectrum there was the petty extortion to which the Carthusian had drawn attention.<sup>62</sup> At the darker end of the spectrum there was murder.

In September 1423, Christian Kubant was named bishop of Osel in Livonia.<sup>63</sup> Considered by Rusdorf to be 'eyn houptfynt unsers ordens', Kubant managed to thwart the Livonian Master who had tried to organise the election of a rival candidate, and eventually arrived in his bishopric in the autumn of 1425. In the Spring of 1429, Kubant journeyed to Rome to present two hundred and thirty-three articles of complaint against the German Order. On 12 July 1429, Kaspar Wandofen, whom Rusdorf was keeping informed of the bishop's whereabouts wrote to the Grand Master concerning the most suitable method of murdering the ill-intentioned Kubant.<sup>64</sup> With considerable lack of concern, Wandofen addressed himself to the comparative merits of Kubant falling overboard en route to Rome. (euws dem schiffe lossen vallen), Kubant dying by the sword or Kubant eating poisoned food. Wandofen even went so far as to allow himself a little joke: 'Whoever is dead, does not do his enemies any

harm, that is a proverb in these parts'.

Such acts of tyranny could have devastating long term political consequences. In the case of Danzig, one such act contributed directly to a climate of opinion in which the long-range lordship of the Polish kings seemed preferable to the daily depredations, on the doorstep so to speak, of a bankrupt corporation bereft, since it was waging war against Christian rulers, of sympathy or support in Europe at large. Put briefly, following the Tannenberg disaster in July 1410 the major towns and the Prussian bishops submitted to the conquering Poles. At the time it seemed likely that the Order's remaining strongpoint, Marienburg - to whose defence Danzig had contributed - was about to fall to the enemy.<sup>65</sup> Following Polish withdrawal and the restoration of the Order's lordship, old scores were settled. Danzig's refusal to contribute to the Order's huge war indemnity - the price of a Polish withdrawal - on the grounds that they had not been paid back their costs incurred in the defence of Marienburg, resulted in an act of cold-blooded murder on the part of the Danzig commander, Heinrich von Plauen.<sup>66</sup> On 7 April 1411, having accepted an invitation to dine with the Order Grossschäffer Ludeke Palsat, the four guests - all prominent Danzig citizens with records of proven loyalty to the Order and high level involvement in its diplomatic and military ventures - went on in the evening to a conference with von Plauen.<sup>67</sup> They were imprisoned upon

arrival and stabbed to death in the early hours of the morning. They had died without making either their confessions or final dispositions 'which is not denied to Jews, pagans, thieves or robbers in their hour of greatest need'. Following a long delay in which the corpses were withheld from the families concerned, the daughter and widow of two of the victims confronted the murderer. Swearing that were she a man she would kill him, she was told by von Plauen, 'Hold your peace or I'll have you put in a sack and drowned'.<sup>68</sup>

Von Plauen's brother, the Grand Master, also called Heinrich von Plauen, then issued a series of articles of complaint against the town of Danzig, in the vain expectation that his brother's actions could be swallowed up in a sea of trivialities.<sup>69</sup> The victims were transformed - in the articles - into men with harness under their clothes with sinister designs upon his brother's life.<sup>70</sup> Since this fairytale could not be taken too far, the article breaks off on the 'discovery' of the weaponry and then switches to the unimpeachable fact that the townsmen had built walls and dug ditches against the Order's will. Heinrich von Plauen remained commander in Danzig until October 1413. His unpunished, indeed excused, actions in April 1411 appear prominently in every subsequent Danzig chronicle which sought to explain the town's final defection from the Order in the Thirteen Years War.<sup>71</sup>

### III. Rebellion

In the preceding section we have seen how individual Chapters made demands of their superiors for better food, improved living conditions or the removal of non-conforming brethren. Very occasionally, one can see something more than this. Thus, on 1 October 1443, the commander in Memel wrote to the Tressler concerning the latter's request for a detailed statement of each brother's financial resources. A financial contribution to the troubled Neumark was in the offing. The brethren had 'gone into counsel' to consider this request and we have the results of their deliberations. Affirming their readiness to sacrifice themselves and all that they had 'when, where and as often as your Grace orders' they nevertheless turned down the request with pleas of poverty. They said that Memel was 'a hot spot' (eynen scharffen orthe), and that they consequently were living a hand to mouth existence.<sup>72</sup>

In 1439-40 three Chapters, Königsberg, Balga and Brandenburg resorted to rebellion to express their hatred of some of the Grand Master's clique of closest advisors and their disenchantment with tendencies which they discerned in the corporation as a whole.

In order to make sense of the rebellion, it is necessary to turn for a moment to events in both the Reich and Livonia. In 1437 the German Master Eberhard



von Saunshiem (1420-43) warned Rusdorf that he had three months to better his government of the Order. In order to give teeth to this ultimative reprimand, Saunshiem appealed to a series of hitherto unknown 'Statutes' purportedly issued by Grand Master Werner von Orseln on 16 September 1329. The 'Statutes' allowed the German Master wide-ranging controls over both the election of the Grand Master and the latter's conduct of his office.<sup>73</sup> Rusdorf was also in difficulties in his dealings with the Livonian branch of the Order. Following an electoral Chapter on 2 March 1438, there were two candidates for the Livonian Mastership, Heinrich Nothleben, the candidate of the minority Rhineland faction in the Chapter and Heidenreich Vincke von Overberg, the candidate of the majority Westphalian 'Tongue' (Zunge).<sup>74</sup> The Grand Master suggested a system of proportional representation - when the Master was from one faction, the Landmarschall should be from the other, with places on the Master's Council divided between the 'tongues' - to resolve the conflict. However whatever goodwill this scheme was designed to generate was lost when the Hochmeister's representative confirmed Nothleben as Master. The outraged Westphalian majority decided to refer the dispute to a General Chapter of the Order and installed Vincke von Overberg as deputy Master. Rusdorf's opponents rapidly made common cause with each other. On 19 July 1439 Saunshiem confirmed Vincke von Overberg as deputy Master of Livonia while on 2 August

the Livonian Chapter recognised the legal force of the forged Orseln 'Statutes'.<sup>75</sup>

In order successfully to combat these twin challenges to his authority, Rusdorf needed to be certain that he had the Prussian chapters solidly behind him. It was this circumstance which made the rebellion a major crisis.

It has been argued that the Königsberg Chapter was pushed into disobedience because of the dismissal of the Frankish Marshal Vincent von Wirsberg and his replacement by Heinrich von Rabenstein on 3 March 1438.<sup>76</sup> The implication is that hostility to von Rabenstein resulted from his nationality. Since both von Rabenstein and his predecessor were south Germans from the neighbourhood of Bayreuth and since the majority of the Königsberg Chapter were also southerners this argument has lost some of its attractions.<sup>77</sup> Von Rabenstein was undoubtedly less popular than his predecessor but this can be attributed to his personality rather than his nationality. Far more significant seems to be the number of changes in the office of Marshal and Commander in Königsberg in the course of Rusdorf's Mastership. Between 15 March 1422 and March 1440 there were ten changes in the office.<sup>78</sup> It was this rather than the nationality of the office-holders - all the Marshals with the exception of the Rhineland Walrabe von Hunsbach were south Germans - which created unrest in the Königsberg Chapter. Finally, the nationality issue,

while important, does not explain why Balga and Brandenburg should make common cause with the Königsberg rebels. If the southerners were dominant at Königsberg, they were in the minority in both other Chapters.<sup>79</sup> Other issues, as we shall see, were of equal importance.

A letter from the German Master to the towns of the 'Niederland' dated 15 September 1439 provided the three Chapters with an opportunity to register their discontent. Saunsheim attempted to put the blame for the schism between himself and the Grand Master squarely on the shoulders of 'bruder Pawl', as he contemptuously referred to his superior.<sup>80</sup> To combat this attempt to undermine his authority in Prussia, Rusdorf summoned representatives from the three Chapters in the 'Niederland' to a demesne called Einsiedel to discuss both the authenticity of the Orseln 'Statutes' and the extravagant claims of the German Master. Order solidarity was to be hammered out in private: Rusdorf clearly hoped to emerge from the meeting with his men solidly behind him for the forthcoming fray with the German Master. However the representatives of the Chapters, the House-commander and Pferdemarschall from Königsberg and the Pfleger from Tapiau, had come with instructions making any future response to the German Master conditional upon the presence of recently dismissed officers and the eldest of each 'Tongue' at a General Chapter to be held to discuss the conflict with Saunsheim.<sup>81</sup> Since no

compromise was reached, the Einsiedel meeting broke up with none of its objectives achieved.

The three Chapters were not slow to take advantage of the fact that Rusdorf was unable to muster a full opposition against them. His most trusted advisor, Heinrich Reuss von Plauen, was on a diplomatic mission in the Reich. On 9 January Johann von Beenhusen the Brandenburg commander, informed Rusdorf that upon returning to his commandery he had found two brothers from Königsberg, including the Pferdemarschall Erwin Hug von Heiligenberg, and two 'herren' from Balga, engaged in negotiations with the Brandenburg Chapter.<sup>82</sup> They had agreed that no decision on any proposals should be reached without the agreement of all three Chapters. Such fresh proposals as von Beenhusen had to make would have to be referred back to the Königsberg Chapter. It was an almost revolutionary declaration. The vertical Order command structure was being challenged by a form of horizontal consultation. In place of the corpse-like obedience expected of the brother in the Rule, there was to be the referral of proposals to individual Chapters. Rusdorf understood the gravity of the threat. In a letter dated 8 February 1440 to the Danzig Council, he remarked 'We notice many things ... which were never heard of before in our Order, nothing good will come of them'.<sup>83</sup>

Early in 1440, the rebel Chapters put their demands and complaints on paper.<sup>84</sup> Their implacable

hostility to all manifestations of regional bias in questions of patronage forms a sort of Leitmotiv throughout the demands. Should Rusdorf die or resign, his successor must be elected 'with the entire, full agreement of a General Chapter with the aid and advice of each tongue from each Chapter'.<sup>85</sup> He was not to be elected by a clique representing one or two 'Tongues'. Positions on both the inner and outer councils in the local commanderies and at Marienburg were to be fairly distributed amongst the six major 'Tongues'. The Grand Master was to be obeyed only in matters that were not 'against God, their honour and the Rule'. Officers were not to be obeyed at all if they misgoverned their Chapters.<sup>86</sup>

The brothers also made demands which were a savage indictment of the systems of control which we have been discussing. They wanted a Visitation of all Chapters, but one in which friendship, kinship or regional connections had no part to play. Following this, there was to be a General Chapter in which the brethren were to play a more positive role than sitting in silence, nodding their heads in passive affirmation of decisions made for them.<sup>87</sup> There were to be no transfers between the forthcoming reforming General Chapter and another that was to be held six years later, unless the transfer had the consent of the brother affected. Criminal brothers were to be 'punished according to old good custom' and not arbitrarily transferred 'as has happened up to now

with some people, without good cause' (ane vordinte sache). The old and the criminal were to be evenly distributed amongst the commanderies and not lumped together in the remote or frontier posts. Too many criminals were not to be together in one place (dar ir nicht czu vil bey enander seyn).<sup>88</sup> The rebels also wanted qualifications for membership of the Order tightened up. The postulant must be able to prove that he was of noble birth (das er von vater und mutter edel geboren sey) as well as being 'pious, Godfearing, truthful and able'. The admission of too many low-born men was responsible for the alienation prevailing between the Order and its subjects. They practised extortion to line the pockets of their equally low-born friends and relatives. Relations between the Order and its subjects would improve as soon as such people were ejected or prevented from joining in the first place.<sup>89</sup> Conservative and reforming in intent, and distinctly naive in their appreciation of the tensions between the Order and Prussian society, the rebels were nevertheless intent upon limiting the power of the Grand Master and his officers over the brethren and correcting abuses in the system of control and punishment.

Towards the end of January 1440 Rusdorf travelled to the Niederland in the hope that his personal presence would have an effect upon the rebels. The journey was a dismal failure. In a letter dated 16 March Rusdorf was unable to conceal his outrage at the

course events had taken.<sup>90</sup> The delegates from the three Chapters had met him at Balga only to unleash a torrent of complaints against the Marshal. They had also used many 'remarkable words' to the Grand Master's face. Despite Rusdorf's assurances that he would come to Königsberg to investigate their grievances against von Rabenstein, the Königsberg brethren quickly deposed the Marshal 'der dovan nicht wuste', seizing his seal in the process.<sup>91</sup> Returning to the Marienburg, the Grand Master found the fortress in the hands of a group of officers, including the commanders of Thorn, Schwetz and Tuchel, supported, it was to become clear, by the second highest officer in Prussia, the Grosskomptur von Helfenstein. The conspiracy had been forged as Rusdorf travelled back from Balga, with von Helfenstein absenting himself from Rusdorf on account of sickness, in order to join the other conspirators at Mewe. As even Rusdorf conceded, the moment was perfectly chosen: 'They chose such a time that they would find us alone. Elbing was away on a mission, from which he is not yet returned, Christburg was in the Mark, so we had no one with us'.<sup>92</sup> Locked into the Marienburg - the conspirators had taken the keys - Rusdorf was forced to agree to wide changes in the membership of his council.<sup>93</sup>

It is important to distinguish between this 'officer's fronde' and the revolt of the Chapters. For, although negotiations between the Grand Master and the rebels were now placed in the hands of von Helfenstein

and Jost Strupperger, the rebels remained steadfast in their demands. In a letter dated 19 February 1440, the house-commanders, lesser officers and brethren of the three Chapters repeated their call for an impartial visitation and a General Chapter.<sup>94</sup> They also demanded the widest possible representation at a conference to be held at Elbing on 6 March. In the meantime, there were to be no punitive transfers and no demonstrations of 'ill will' towards individuals in the rebel Chapters. Despite the note of reconciliation upon which the letter ended, there can be no mistaking the intransigence of the rebels.

Rusdorf thought increasingly in terms of a military solution to the rebellion 24. However, as the commander in Rheden informed him on 21 March, the Knights of the locality selected for the task were refusing to move against the rebels on the grounds that they had sworn an oath to the entire Order.<sup>95</sup> The three Chapters had also taken out insurance against any acts of aggression.

On 3 April 1440 the rebels informed the knights and towns of the Culmerland of the conflicts within the Order which, they said were to 'the eternal injury, shame, burden, disruption and ruin of the land'.<sup>96</sup> While they repeated their demand for fair representation of the 'Tongues' in Order offices, they also said that Rusdorf and the Gebietiger were disobedient to the Rule 'der hobtmutter unsers ordens'. They had also learnt



that Rusdorf 'had requested a gathering (samelunge) from each district in order to proceed against the three Chapters'. The rebels requested the recipients of the letter not only to refuse to take part in acts of violence against them but to put pressure on Rusdorf to negotiate with them and to canvas other secular and ecclesiastical notables on their behalf. Much play was made with the support already pledged by Königsberg, which one knows had promised to protect the rebel Chapters in the event of military action on the part of the Grand Master.<sup>97</sup> The rebels suggested a conference within fourteen days, or at any rate 'before Elbing comes back'. They had a pessimistic view of the conduct of affairs at Marienburg. The towns were to ensure that

we will come safely to and from the day and return to our Chapters, that no one will play the traitor with us at the meeting, as recently people did with the old Grosskomptur and certain other officers at Marienburg.<sup>98</sup>

The mood of the rebels at Balga was equally tense. On 17 April they refused to admit emissaries from the Grand Master into the commandery. All negotiations had to be conducted at Königsberg: 'at this time we will speak with nobody'.<sup>99</sup>

The rebel Chapter's dependence upon the towns for protection in the event of military measures being used against them proved fatal to their cause. They had hoped to widen their support with the claim that there was some coincidence of interest between them and the Prussian Estates, using this as a form of lever to prise

concessions from Rusdorf. What they did not grasp - and their political talents seem to have been of modest proportions - was that the Estates could use them in a similar fashion to press fiscal concessions from the weakened Order, ditching their rebel allies once the concessions had been achieved.<sup>100</sup> Following the meeting of the Estates on 5 May 1440, at which Rusdorf was forced to make substantial concessions concerning the Pfundzoll, the rebels soon discovered that they were on their own. By 12 May a compromise had been negotiated, which conceded the principle of regional representation on the inner and outer councils and in other offices.<sup>101</sup> Tangible gains were few, since along with the authors of the officer's putsch, three of Rusdorf's most hated intimates von Plauen, von Rabenstein and Nicolaus Postar were still on one or other of the councils.<sup>102</sup> In a letter of reconciliation dated 13 May 1440 Rusdorf also promised to refrain from the use of punitive transfers and to judge the sinful in accordance with the procedures established in the Statutes.<sup>103</sup> Conscious of their social status, the brethren were not prepared to be shuffled hither and thither by their superiors. Conscious of their social status, they also wanted a more socially exclusive Order and one in which offices were allocated in such a way that everyone got his cut. If they had no noble republic in mind, they had advanced some considerable way towards one. It was, at the very least, a considerable step away from

the Christ-like obedience towards one's superiors as set out in the Rule.

NOTES

1. Scriptores rerum Prussicarum. Die Geschichtsquellen der Preussischen Vorzeit bis zum Untergange der Ordensherrschaft, (S.R.P), ed. T. Hirsch, M. Töppen and E. Strehlke, vols. 1-v (Leipzig 1861-74), iv, pp. 448-465.
2. C.A. Lückcrath, Paul von Rusdorf, Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1422-1441 (Bad Godesberg 1969), p. 139; Akten der Ständetage Preussens unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens, ed. M. Töppen (Leipzig 1878, Neudruck Aalen 1973), i, pp. 438-439; Regesta historico-diplomatica Ordinis S. Mariae Theutonicorum 1198-1525, ed. E. Joachim and W. Hubatsch, Part I: Regesten des Ordensbriefarchivs, i, 1-2 (Göttingen 1948-50), nos. 4503; 4505; 4507; 4512; 4523; 4525; 4529; 4530; 4567. Henceforth references will be to 'OBA' followed by the Regesta number.
3. SRP 4; p. 460.
4. T. Hirsch, 'Geschichte des Karthauser Kreises bis zum Aufhören der Ordensherrschaft', in Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins, v, 6 (1882) pp. 87-96; K. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens unter dem Hochmeister Konrad von Erlichshausen 1441-1449 (Göttingen 1953), p. 70; P. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig bis 1626 (Danzig 1913) i, p. 80 for the Grand Master's grant to the Carthusians of 4 stalls in the Danziger Altstadt in 1399.
5. T. Hirsch, 'Geschichte des Karthauser Kreises', p. 117-118. See GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10252 for a dispute between the Order and the Cistercians of Oliva over the building of a copper-mill. In his letter of 17 June 1450 the commander of Danzig strongly opposed the Abbot's plans for the building of the mill.
6. SRP 4, pp. 382-383.
7. Ibid., pp. 380-381.
8. SRP 4, pp. 413-415.
9. Ibid., p. 415.
10. SRP 3, p. 639ff.
11. Ibid., pp. 700-701.

12. Ibid., pp. 702-703.
13. GSA Ordensfoliant (OF) 13, fol. 249. For a letter of credence given to the Order visitors to Livonia, Johann von Behnhuwzen and Niclas Crapitz on 26 January 1451 see OF 17, pp. 593-594. See also GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 5815 in which the commander in Rheden accepts his appointment as an Order visitor. On visitations in general see J. Voigt, Geschichte des Deutschen Ritterordens in seinen zwölf Balleien in Deutschland (Berlin 1857) vol. i, pp. 208-216.
14. GSA OF 13, fol. 248.
15. W. Ziese mer, 'Visitationsberichte aus dem Culmerland' in Altpreussische Monatsschrift, 53 (1917), pp. 486-493.
16. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 3094. The report was printed by M. Töppen, Akten der Ständetage Preussens, i, p. 344 and by Arthur Semrau in his 'Das Ordenshaus Thorn', in Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn, 47 (1939), pp. 56-57. The commandery was to be severely damaged by melting ice in the Spring of 1447. For the commander's report see GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9321.
17. W. Ziese mer, 'Visitationsberichte', p. 488.
18. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7904.
19. Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens, ed. M. Perl bach (Halle 1890), p. 156.
20. GSA OF 60. See also Liv-, est und kurländisches Urkundenbuch ed. F. von Bunge, H. Hildebrand and P. Schwarz (Riga/Moscow 1896), ix, no. 898, pp. 609-610. For the method by which copies of the Rule in the commanderies were brought up-to-date, see GSA OBA Reg. I, No. 8858. The Pfleger in Lochstedt had lost his copy otherwise he would seal it and send it to the Marienburg house-commander. He and the priestbrothers were still frantically searching.
21. GSA OF 16, fols. 804-807 and GSA OBA, REg. I, no. 9457.
22. 'Gesetze des Hochmeisters Paul von Rusdorf und Vorschriften der Visitation', in Preussisches Archiv oder Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Kunde der Vorzeit, ed. K. Faber, Erste Sammlung (Königsberg 1809), ii, pp. 235-249. For the Gebietigerrat see F. Milthaler, Die Grossgebietiger des Deutschen Ritterordens bis 1440, in the series Schriften der Albertus-Universität, Band 26 (Königsberg 1940), pp. 30-32 and P.G.

Thielen, Die Verwaltung des Ordensstaates Preussen vornehmlich im 15. Jahrhundert (Köln/Graz 1965), pp. 80-83.

23. Akten der Standetage Preussens, ed. M. Töppen, i, p. 498.
24. GSA OF 166m, fol. 49a-55.
25. 'Gesetze' des Hochmeisters Paul von Rusdorf', ed. K. Faber, articles 4, 5, 10 and 48 respectively.
26. J. Riley-Smith, The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus c. 1050-1310 (1967), pp. 255-257.
27. Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens, ed. M. Perlbach (Halle 1890), p. 152.
28. Ibid., p. 155. Compare this with article 20 of the 'Gesetze des Hochmeisters Paul von Rusdorf', ed. K. Faber, p. 242.
29. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7851. For similar directives see also nos. 7864 and 8175.
30. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 4984.
31. Ibid.
32. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9696.
33. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7994. See also no. 8831 (July 25 1445) - the Vogt in the Neumark requests that the 'difficult' and 'extravagant' cellar-master in Driesen be transferred to Slochaw, and no. 9586, 10 July 1448, Pfleger in Bulow requests a cellar-master recommended by commander in Elbing, and no. 10804, July 8, 1451, Symon Slegel, cellar-master in Schivelbein 'who desires to go to Schlochau' is replaced by brother Vilscher from Schlochau.. An interesting transfer took place in 1422. The commander of Slochaw wrote to the Grand Master asking him to move three brothers since there were not enough beds for them. He was amazed that the Grand Master was still sending him brothers, and he felt that with 26 in residence, he had enough. The letter was printed by J. Voigt in his Geschichte Marienburgs (Königsberg, 1824), pp. 550-551.
34. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9719.
35. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9725. The Grosskomtur wrote to the Grand Master concerning this correspondence but left the decision to the latter. See GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9731.

36. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9726.
37. GSA OBA Reg. I, nos. 5208; 5221; 6144; 6268; 6443.
38. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9721.
39. Johannes Voigt, Geschichte Preussens von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Untergange der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens, in nine volumes (Königsberg 1827-1839), vi, pp. 517-524 for a brief account; also, G. Schmidt, 'Die Handhabung der Strafgewalt gegen Angehörige des Deutschen Ritterordens', Beihefte zum Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg/Pr., iv (Kitzingen 1954), pp. v-179 for a more detailed comparative treatment of the theoretical aspects of the administration of justice. Unfortunately Dr. Schmidt did not consider a single case showing Order justice in action.
40. Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens, ed. M. Perlbach, pp. 77-80 and 154.
41. Ibid., p. 78.
42. Schmidt, 'Handhabung der Strafgewalt', p. 49.
43. Ibid., pp. 109-127.
44. For Hospitaller punishments see J. Riley-Smith, The Knight of St. John, pp. 267-271.
45. Die Statuten des Deutschen Ordens, ed. M. Perlbach, p. 85f.
46. 'Gesetze des Hochmeisters Paul von Rusdorf', ed. K. Faber, p. 239.
47. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 5580. In the event of flight efforts were made to seal the frontiers. On 14 June 1432, following the flight of brother Hans Wirsberger, the Königsberg commander asked the Grand Master to ensure that Hans did not get across the frontiers. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 6131.
48. Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie, (Veröffentlichungen der Niedersächsischen Archivverwaltung Heft 32, Göttingen 1973), ed. H. Koeppen, iv, 1 (1429-1432), no. 259, pp. 311-312.
49. Ibid., no. 270, pp. 322-323.
50. Ibid., p. 323.
51. Ibid., no. 318, p. 360.

52. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8662.
53. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8928.
54. e.g. the case of Heinrich Witzleben mentioned in a letter dated 14 November 1447 in Liv-,est und kurländisches Urkundenbuch, ed. F. von Bunge, H. Hildebrand and P. Schwarz (Riga/Muscov 1896), x, no. 394, p. 267. See also von Erlichshausen's laws of April 28 1441 for Livonia, in the same volume, no. 716, pp. 501-505, article 13 (p. 503).
55. GSA OF 16, fol. 795. See also GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 10586 (26 February 1451). The Hauptmann in Kustrin requested that Jacop a priest-brother be sent back to Prussia on account of his bad behaviour. GSA OF 16, fol. 795. A similar fate awaited those who caused trouble in the bailiwick of Koblenz. On 18 June 1447 Conrad von Erlichshausen empowered the new commander Klas von Gielsdorf to transfer disobedient brethren to Prussia or Austria. A brother Dittrich von Slendernhayn was to be forthwith sent to Prussia. Brother von Clen, responsible for 'great ill-will' in the bailiwick was to be warned to desist in Chapter and, failing that 'the Lord Grand Master will send him to Livland'. The letter was edited by H. Reimer in his 'Der Verfall der Deutschordensballei Koblenz im 15. Jahrhundert', in Trierisches Archiv, 11 (1907), p. 21. Possibly 'Dittrich' is to be identified with a Dietrich who was the subject of an undated letter from the Koblenz commander to the Grand Master. He had been disobedient in Osterrode and had been transferred to Koblenz where he was imprisoned. In the course of his imprisonment, his creditors had appeared. The commander had summoned Dietrich's mother in an attempt to make the family rather than the Order liable for the debts. Since she refused to assume liability, the commander 'with the advice of my eldest brethren sent Dietrich home until such time as the debts were paid' (Do sante ich ir mit raide mynre eldesten broider diederich heym, Also lange bis dy schoult bezaelt wer) Mother and son had subsequently reappeared demanding readmission to the Order, which the commander refused, until the debts were paid and Dietrich had submitted to the statutory punishment. Both rejected this solution in a haughty fashion and said 'hoichmoedeclichen' that they would seek justice from the Grand Master in Prussia armed with 'prince's letters which they well might acquire so that your Grace would give him the mantle again without penalty'. The commander hoped that his letter would set the matter straight before Dietrich, who was on the way, arrived with another tale to tell. The letter is in GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7898.



56. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8813. See GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7304 for a brother Anselm, 'a wild brother' who had been transferred from Balga to Memel. For an example of a transfer from Prussia to the Reich see GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 12360 (31 August 1453).
57. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 5595.
58. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7392.
59. GSA OF 16, fols. 376-381; 707-717. See also Voigt Geschichte Preussens, viii, pp. 124-126, and K. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, pp. 64-65.
60. e.g. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 9370. Voigt, Geschichte Preussens, viii, p. 126.
61. Das Grosse Ämterbuch des Deutschen Ordens, ed. W. Ziesemer (Wiesbaden 1968, reprint of the 1921 edition), p. 235. He was still at the Brandenburg commandery in 1451, see p. 240.
62. SRP 4, especially pp. 458-460.
63. C.A. Luckerath, Paul von Rusdorf, pp. 104-105.
64. Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren, ed. H. Koeppen, iv, 1, no. 45, pp. 95-97. In Wandofen's opinion Kubant was 'ein unvorschamther man', see the former's letter to the Grand Master dated 25 September 1430 in Die Berichte der Generalprokuratoren, iv, 1, no. 171, p. 218. For a fascinating report on Wandofen's life in Rome, including his relations with Rhenish, Bavarian and Roman prostitutes see no. 217, pp. 270-272.
65. Theodor Hirsch, Handels-und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens (Leipzig 1858), p. 41.
66. 'Beiträge zur Geschichte Heinrichs von Plauen 1411-1413', by E. Lampe, in Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins, 26, (1889), pp. 5-11; 'Der Hochmeister Heinrich von Plauen im Konflikt mit den Städten des Ordenslandes Preussen', by K. Graske, in Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins, 35 (1896), pp. 1-17; 'Die Politik des Hochmeisters Heinrich von Plauen gegen die Grossen Städte' by C. Krollmann, in Oberländische Geschichtsblätter, Jahrbuch des Oberländischen Geschichtsvereins, Heft 12, vol. iii (1910), pp. 81-93; and 'Die Ursachen des Abfalls Danzigs vom Deutschen Orden', by Joseph Leinz, in Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel-und

- Ostdeutschlands, vol. 13/14 (1965), p. 2f; G. Kettener, 'Die Hanse und der Deutsche Orden unter den Hochmeister Heinrich von Plauen und Michael Kuchmeister (1410-1420) Hansische Geschichtsblätter (1962) E. Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht im Ordenslande Preussen und das Mittelalterliche Europa (Göttingen, 1955), pp. 73f.
67. SRP 4, pp. 384-401. For Konrad Leskau's diplomatic work on the Order's behalf see E. Kutowski, Zur Geschichte der Söldner in den Heeren des Deutschordensstaates in Preussen bis zum ersten Thorner Frieden (1 Februar 1411), Oberländische Geschichtsblätter, vol. III Heft 14 (1912), p. 439; p. 503.
68. SRP 4, pp. 377-378.
69. 'Die Klageartikel des Hochmeisters Heinrich von Plauen gegen die Stadt Danzig', Anhang B in Hirsch, 'Der Danziger Bericht' in SRP 4, pp. 398-401.
70. Ibid., p. 400.
71. See for example, 'Die Danziger Chronik vom Bunde' in SRP 4, pp. 424-425.
72. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8330. For similar fund-raising endeavours see GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 8323, and no. 6392 (4 April 1433) for a list of the brothers at Brandenburg and their wealth.
73. C.A. Lückcrath, "Paul von Rusdorf, p. 174. On the 'Statutes' see 'Zur Geschichte und Kritik der angeblichen Statuten des Hochmeisters Werner von Orseln', by A. Seraphim in Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte, 28 (1915), pp. 1-82, and Deutschordensstaat und Deutschordensballeien by Rudolf ten Haaf in the series Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft, vol. 5 (Second edition, Göttingen 1951), pp. 33-35.
74. C.A. Luckerath, Paul von Rusdorf, p. 177f.
75. Ibid., p. 181. See also L. Arbusow, Grundriss der Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Kurlands, (Riga 1908), pp. 99-100.
76. SRP 3, p. 641. Note 1.
77. The names of the Marshals can be found in Thielen, Verwaltung, pp. 123-124 and then their origins located in 'Gebietiger des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen nach ihrer Herkunft' an alphabetical list with map drawn up by Ernst Weichbrodt for the Historisch-geographischer Atlas des Preussenlandes,

- ed. H. and G. Mortensen and R. Wenskus (Wiesbaden 1968), Lieferung 1.
78. SRP 3, p. 700. On the revolts see 'Paul von Rusdorf und die Konvente von Königsberg, Balga und Brandenburg', by Sophie Meyer, in Altpreussische Monatsschrift 46 (1909), pp. 363-417 and 543-591.
  79. SRP 3, p. 702. Note 4.
  80. ASP 2, pp. 123-127.
  81. Ibid., no. 90a, p. 144.
  82. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7634.
  83. ASP 2, no. 89, pp. 143-144.
  84. Ibid., no. 90b, p. 145; SRP 3, pp. 642-643 and 702-704 note 4 and GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7793.
  85. SRP 3, p. 642.
  86. Ibid., p. 642.
  87. Meyer, 'Paul von Rusdorf und die Konvente', p. 391.
  88. SRP 3, p. 704; GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7793.
  89. SRP 3, p. 642. On the social origins of Order Brothers see M. Hellmann, 'Bemerkungen zur Sozialgeschichtlichen Erforschung des Deutschen Ordens' in Historische Jahrbuch, 80 (1961), pp. 126-142.
  90. ASP 2, no. 134, pp. 185-188.
  91. Ibid., p. 186.
  92. Ibid., p. 186.
  93. C.A. Lückcrath, Paul von Rusdorf, pp. 190-191.
  94. ASP 2, p. 95, pp. 149-152.
  95. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7685.
  96. ASP 2, no. 135, pp. 188-189.
  97. Ibid., no. 137, pp. 190-195.
  98. Ibid., no. 139, pp. 195-198.
  99. Ibid., p. 193.
  100. GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7693. The tensions within the

Order at this time can be clearly seen in a letter of the Thorn Chapter dated 21 April 1440, GSA OBA Reg. I, no. 7698. The ex-Marshall von Rabenstein had arrived at Thorn to take up his new commandery, accompanied by crossbowmen and with wagons brimming with arms. The Chapter were clearly apprehensive about the new commander's intentions: 'und wir doch nicht enwosten was wir dorusz sulden czihen ader in welcher meynunge sie mit semlichem harnasch ins huws qwomen'. They wanted to hang on to their previous commander, 'bis wir sehen werden und dirkennen wie die angefangen sachen mit den conventen ... sich dirfolgen werden und czum gutten ende als wir hoffen komen'.

101. See C.A. Lückcrath, Paul von Rusdorf, p. 199.
102. ASP 2, no. 153, pp. 222-224.
103. Ibid., no. 154, pp. 224-225.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE UNMAKING OF A LORDSHIP: THE PRUSSIAN  
ESTATES AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE GOVERNMENT  
OF THE ORDER

CHAPTER FIVETHE UNMAKING OF A LORDSHIP: THE PRUSSIAN ESTATES  
AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ORDER1. Men of Iron. The mercenaries and the sale of  
Marienburg

On the night of 4 and 5 June 1457 the Bohemian mercenary captain Ulrich Czerwenka, who had been instrumental in arranging the sale of Marienburg to the King of Poland, the Polish Estates and the Prussian Union, the alliance of urban and landed interests opposed to the Order, admitted a band of Polish and Union soldiery to the castle who proceeded to ransack the baggage of the Grand Master of the German Order as he was about to depart from the headquarters. Eventually the Grand Master set out although his route was re-arranged so that he might be exhibited in castles and towns under the control of his enemies.<sup>1</sup>

Ludwig von Erlichshausen was lucky to leave the headquarters alive. In the months preceding the sale of the castle both he and his subordinates had been subjected to the rising fury of the Order's own unpaid mercenaries who had effectively taken over the beleaguered fortress on 2 May 1455.<sup>2</sup> Liable - as one mercenary captain put it - 'to be chopped into pieces' (zu stücke houwen), by their own unpaid subordinates, the mercenary leaders responded increasingly irritably to the Grand

Master's promises to conjure up money that he no longer had. On 18 June 1456 they told him that if the commander of Elbing failed to produce money that he was supposed to deliver in order to redeem the pawned fortresses, 'they simply would not negotiate anymore, and if an angel came down from heaven and wanted to negotiate on behalf of the Order, they would not take him up on it'.<sup>3</sup> Since some of the mercenary leaders were in receipt of bribes from Danzig, designed to ensure that they would reject almost any offers made by the Order, it did not make much difference when the commander actually did produce money.<sup>4</sup> Late in October 1456 he offered to pay them 13,000 Hungarian Gulden with a further 6,000 Gulden eight days later. One of the mercenaries was led by the arm so that he could see and handle these formidable sums, Ignoring the evidence of their own eyes and the fact that the Poles and their Prussian allies were in no position to match these sums, they sent the commander away and accepted 6,250 Gulden from Danzig.<sup>5</sup>

Ironically it was the depredations of the mercenaries in Prussia that by reducing the Order's income made it impossible for them to be paid. The requisitioning of fodder for their horses rapidly degenerated into the plundering of the contents of houses and the forcible appropriation of rents. One mercenary captain allowed the peasants in his territory eight days grace to pay him the rent, thereafter he considered himself entitled to use fire and the sword.<sup>6</sup>

The quality of life for the Order brethren rapidly declined. On 10 August 1456 a group of Bohemians broke into the malt-house in Marienburg and attacked and robbed five officers of the Order. Two of the latter jumped from a high window rather than remain in the building with the irate brutalised veterans of the battlefields of central Europe.<sup>7</sup> A few weeks later, Laurentius Blumenau, doctor of both laws, habitué of the universities of Leipzig, Padua and Bologna and counsellor to the Grand Master experienced some anxious moments at the hands of the Austrian mercenary captain Friedemann Panczer von Smojno. Fresh from an acrimonious meeting with the Grand Master, Panczer came upon Dr. Blumenau in a corridor of the palace. After throwing the Doctor to the ground, Panczer took the keys to his chambers and made off with the Doctor's valuables.<sup>8</sup>

Some of the mercenaries more sadistic actions were probably motivated by ideas imbibed in the heady atmosphere of fifteenth century Bohemia. In Mewe they set upon priest-brothers of the Order and shaved off their beards - managing to cut off pieces from their lips in the process. In Marienburg they upset the crucifix and ran up and down with blasphemous shrieks of delight.<sup>9</sup>

In a last ditch effort to satisfy the mercenaries' craving for reimbursement the Grand Master surrendered the contents of the chapel to them. But jewels, crosses and monstrances - the liturgical treasure of over two



centuries - were handed over to no avail.<sup>10</sup> The mercenaries began to apply a form of psychological warfare. The Grand Master was shunted from chamber to chamber until he was left with only a bed chamber.<sup>11</sup> He had to dine off tin plate; the portions of food served to the brethren became smaller, and the beer they had to drink was warm.<sup>12</sup> Eventually in August and September the mercenaries expelled the Grand Master's staff of jurists, scribes and chaplains and forbade him to communicate by letter with the outside world.<sup>13</sup> e/

In a sense one may understand the mercenaries' keenness to be properly paid. It was bad business practice to be constantly fobbed off with promises: other employers might pick up the habit. Some of their unpaid colleagues on the other side who declared a feud against Kasimir of Poland and who were unloved and unwanted in the Bohemia of Georg Podiebrad were condemned to a life of wandering banditry in the heights about Auschwitz and the mountain passes of the Carpathians.<sup>14</sup>

On 16 August 1456 the Polish chancellor John Gruszynski and representatives of the Polish and Prussian Estates met in Thorn to exchange the documents of sale with seventy-four mercenary captains and file-leaders (Rottenfuhrer).<sup>15</sup> The terms of the deal were fully in keeping with its treacherous purpose. Although the mercenary signatories only represented about a third of the mercenaries in the Order's employ - about 2,500 from a total force of about 7,000 - which rendered the

sale illegal since the Grand Master had pawned the Order's remaining fortresses to the whole mercenary force, they claimed financial compensation for a force of 6,338 even though many of these were against the sale or had long since left Prussia.<sup>16</sup> Shortly after the departure of the Grand Master<sup>f</sup>, King Kasimir IV of Poland entered Marienburg. What were the internal forces and in particular the Prussian Union, which opposed the Order? Why did this catastrophe for the Order occur?

## 2. Who were 'the Estates'?

The beginnings of the Prussian Estates are to be sought in the increasing interaction from the mid-fourteenth century onwards of the Prussian towns and the towns of north and western Germany.<sup>17</sup> From the 1370s onwards representatives of the big six Prussian towns of Culm, Thorn, Elbing, Danzig, Königsberg and Braunsberg held meetings - usually in Marienburg and invariably in the presence of the Grand Master<sup>18</sup> - to discuss external relations,<sup>19</sup> trade and guild regulations<sup>20</sup> and sometimes to defend their rights against the encroachments of the Order.<sup>21</sup> About forty such gatherings took place between the mid-fourteenth century and 1411.<sup>22</sup> In 1412<sup>23</sup> and 1420<sup>24</sup> the delegates decreed that a record should be kept of the deliberations of each Diet which was to be copied into 'der stat recesszbuch' in the

delegates home towns to ensure continuity of business from Diet to Diet.

There was nothing necessarily antipathetic about these meetings of lordship and subjects, indeed they often resulted in measures beneficial to both parties. For example in 1417 and 1420 the Diets resulted in the issue of ordinances designed to restrict the mobility and wages of servants and artisans.<sup>25</sup> In 1420 the big six towns, who were preparing to send a delegation to the Hanseatic Diet in Stralsund, asked the Grand Master whether he had any instructions of his own for their plenipotentiaries.<sup>26</sup>

Since the Order had succeeded in incorporating - that is occupying them with priest-brothers of the Order - three of the four cathedral chapters of Prussia (Culm, Samland and Pomesania), and since the advocates (Vögte), of these three sees and of the remaining unincorporated chapter of Ermland were invariably knights of the Order, one cannot speak accurately of a clerical Estate in Prussia.<sup>27</sup> As Wenskus has said, 'in Prussia the spirituality did not form an Estate but was identical with the lordship'.<sup>28</sup>

The knights and freemen, or the 'country' as they were commonly called, formed a further Estate. In his introductory essays to the records of the Estates, Max Töppen made a number of valuable observations on this class. He drew attention to their virtual exclusion from both membership and office in the Order,

a point the recent researches of Wenskus have confirmed, and to their consequently restricted political horizons.<sup>29</sup> They might aspire to the position of standard-bearer of the local military contingent or they might become provincial judges in the territorial courts (Landgerichte), which served the freemen who stood outside the jurisdiction of village Schulzen, towns, and big estate owners.<sup>30</sup> However Töppen did not really attempt to explain where and how their political consciousness was formed. This is a difficult question which ought to be broached but can at present be answered only tentatively.

Firstly one may presuppose a measure of class self interest from the facts of the Knights and freemen being possessed of supra-normal landed property often charged with a superior form of military service. As Górski has said, it was the profits from the produce of their land that provided them with the means to expend time at Diets and assemblies: 'a ruined nobility is not permitted the luxury of attending assemblies'.<sup>31</sup> Certainly at least one Order officer saw a connection between landed well-being and political trouble making. In a letter dated 8 May 1453 the Pfleger in Neidenburg said to the Grand Master that if the von Baisen's had less landed estates (weniger guter ym lande), the Order would not be in the trouble that it was in.<sup>32</sup>

Their source of livelihood meant that they had common interests as employers or consumers. Two of the records of early gatherings of the landed freemen may illustrate this point. In the first dated 1400, the

freemen of the Culmerland opined inter alia 'that their servants who eat their bread (ihr Brod essen), shall not appear in any urban court but shall be summoned before the lords whom they serve and he shall decide about all of their wrong-doings'.<sup>33</sup> The second document, which bears no date, also records the proceedings of a Diet in the Culmerland. In this case the eldest of their number presented articles to the officers of the Order concerning the rates to be paid to agricultural labourers. The document was conceived in a spirit of landlordly mutual mistrust. The piece-work rates for reapers were fixed, the cottagers were warned that if they turned their noses up at the wages on offer during harvest time 'they won't know what's coming to them' and two or three labourers in each district were to take oaths to report any landholder who either offered or paid higher wages.<sup>34</sup> As landholders they had common interests that were sometimes antipathetic to those of the towns. For example in 1444 the landholders of Schonsee, Leipe and Gollub 'who must sustain themselves from the fields' protested about the towns' attempts to inhibit the access of foreign traders to the hinterland.<sup>35</sup>

The freemen - in other words those who held land directly from the Order by German law who were subject neither to the village courts nor the jurisdiction of the owners of large estates - also met one another in the country courts. The latter were held three or four times a year in towns centrally situated

within the commanderies.<sup>36</sup> In these courts they carried out land transactions, settled boundary disputes, problems concerning guardianships and inheritances or submitted their disputes to the arbitration of third parties chosen by themselves.<sup>37</sup> The offices of local judge (Landrichter), Master of the jury or juryman served to distinguish some of the members of the landed class from their fellows. The judges were appointees of the Order and were invariably chosen from families with a long history in the area; the Baisens in Ermland, 5 of whom were judges in the fifteenth century, Kunsecks in Bartenstein and Otlaus in Riesenburg.<sup>38</sup> The judge possessed a seal and the keys to the chest containing the records of the court. The jurors, of whom there were twelve, were usually estate holders. One of their number, perhaps the eldest, most experienced or most esteemed was called the Master of the jury.<sup>39</sup> For our purposes what is important is less the legal significance of these courts than the opportunity they afforded the landed classes of Prussia to meet one another. As Gause remarked, the courts provided them with a forum and occasion to discuss their grievances against the government of the Order.<sup>40</sup> By providing a focal point the courts also did much to sharpen their consciousness of Estate. It is possible to particularise concerning how a judicial occasion could be politicised: a chance to give voice to grievances. In November 1444 the commander of Schwetz, following orders from the Grand

Master to discuss the regime with the 'wisest' men in his locality discovered the latter not at home but gathered at the court. There they complained that the prices they were receiving for their produce were too low and that the prices of manufactured goods were too high on account of the high wages paid to artisans.<sup>41</sup> In May 1452 the Vogt in Roggenhausen reported an impending meeting of the Lizard League which was to take place a day before the court met in Liessau.<sup>42</sup> The Order was alive to the dangers inherent in these judicial occasions. In April 1453 the council in Elbing informed their colleagues in Culm of attempts by the commander of Elbing to pack the jury in the commandery of Elbing with men who had left the Union. In order to avoid an ugly scene, the judge and jurors - all of whom had been replaced - had walked out of the court.<sup>43</sup> The commander of Elbing, Heinrich Reuss von Plauen - who was possibly the most 'hawkish' of the senior Order officers knew where the enemy lay. A list of mid-fifteenth century provincial judges reads like a 'Who's Who' of the opponents of the Order. Hans von Logendorff, Segenand von Wapels, Dietrich von Krixen, Hannus von Usdau, Jorge Scolim and Tytcze von der Marwitz, Hans von Rogetteln, Jakob von Baisen, Fabian von Wusen, Caspar Glabun, Nikolaus von Wolkaw, and Melchior von dem Burgfelde were all provincial judges in the 1440s and 1450s. They were also all closely involved in either the formation or leadership of the Bund and, virtually without exception, they all became prominent and dedicated opponents of

the Order regime.<sup>44</sup>

A second important element in the formation of consciousness of Estate was a sense of a shared history and destiny which had somehow gone wrong. As in other conquest societies - such as Norman England - there was a sense of a joint historical mission which by its nature did not entitle any one of the participants to oppress the rest. While no Prussian nobleman went so far as to brandish an 'ancient and rusty sword' as proof of his title, the authors of the 'Grounds for the Union' devoted a lengthy section to their perceptions of the course of Prussian history that had its roots in aggrieved feelings not unlike those of the Earl of Warenne<sup>45</sup>

their forefathers and fathers came to Prussia to fight loyally against the heathen with loss of their blood in order to bring them into the Christian Faith and they helped master the land, as it exists to-day ... and they helped bring other powerful lords and countries that border on Prussia to the Faith and they did this in praise of God and because of their liberty. Which liberty they have enjoyed for many years. However this was transformed into a multitude of oppressions which did not trouble their fathers in the old days. The latter hoped that their descendants would be favoured with much greater freedom and reward and that the freedom might grow. But from the moment the land of Prussia and the lands around it achieved peace and unity, the Order began to squander the good deeds, services and support of their subjects and burdened them with uncustomary taxes and unseemly charges when they had hoped for greater reward.<sup>46</sup>

This view of Prussian history, as a joint-mission betrayed, was also current in cities outside Prussia.



In a letter dated 25 May 1442 Dytmar Keysser reported to the Grand Master that Lübeck merchants were saying that the Order was founded by merchants from Lübeck and Bremen who had played a crucial part too in the conquest of Prussia 'so that they should defend Christendom and maintain a free country with no taxes'. He did not know what the Lübeck ruling elite thought but 'these are the rumours amongst the common people'.<sup>47</sup>

Prussia had not turned out to be a colossal promised land. As we have seen, the building of seigneurial latifundiae was checked, power was firmly in the hands of an alien ruling oligarchy which stunted the political aspirations of the local landed classes and the urban patricians. The former were also increasingly denied the chance of indulging their self-esteem on the battlefields since the Order preferred the services of professional soldiers. This situation would have been intolerable had it remained inert: it became impossible once the bankrupt corporation moved over to a grasping fiscalism. Finally there was the attitude of the Order members to the landed elite in the localities and the urban patricians. According to one Danzig chronicler, the Order members had a more exclusive view of Prussian history than their erstwhile partners in the conquest: 'They say that they won us with the sword ... and they can totally destroy us and the towns'.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the brothers of the Order did not consider the Prussian ruling class to be their

equals. One chronicler favourable to the Order described sarcastically how the Danzig Bürgermeister Wilhelm Jordan 'a peasant born', was dubbed a knight by the King of Bohemia and Hungary.<sup>49</sup> Another like-minded chronicler spoke of 'Jocusch von Schwenten, knight, whom the King of Poland dubbed a knight by the pillory (staupsaule), in Thorn along with other traitors.<sup>50</sup>

These antipathies were mutual and had their roots in regional and linguistic differences. The Danzig chronicler of the Bund gave vent to his hostility towards the arrogant southerners (hoffertigen Swaben, Peyeren und Francken), whom he said, in contrast to earlier days, were monopolising the senior positions in the Order. If one attempted to appeal to the Grand Master above their heads, they were liable to answer

Look here, this is the Grand Master  
sitting here! I'll be Grand Master  
enough for you!<sup>51</sup>

Effectively, this overbearing self-confidence and the denial of the existence and goals of a shared historical mission ensured that the country courts and incipient Diets should become crucial moving parts in a rebellion of shattering consequences for the government of the Order.

### 3. The development of the Estates: legislation, foreign relations and taxation

In the course of the years 1411-54 meetings of the Estates were held with increasing frequency.

The impulse to meet came from the manifest usefulness of a parliamentary forum to both the Order and the Estates in law and treaty-making and increasingly from the Order's concern to raise money by taxation.

Firstly there was the desire of the Order, towns and 'the country' to give their legislative action efficacy and publicity. The legislation often reflects the interests of both lordship and subjects, although it is difficult to determine who initiated the measures proposed. For example, the subject of goldsmiths was discussed in a Diet in Marienburg on 17 May 1395.<sup>52</sup> Three days later the Grand Master issued an ordinance concerning goldsmiths as a result of his consultations with the towns.<sup>53</sup> Gold works were to bear the mark of the goldsmith and his town and goldsmiths were not to melt down the Prussian coin for their use. The former part of the ordinance reflected the interest of the towns while the latter - which was tagged on - can be shown to be the Grand Master's own initiative. In 1394 he issued an ordinance concerning the fees to be paid to professional pleaders following consultations with the 'eldest' knights and freemen.<sup>54</sup> After Diets held in May and July 1416 in which both Estates took part, the Grand Master published an ordinance concerning a new issue of coin.<sup>55</sup> Much of this piecemeal legislation was then gathered together and reissued as the 'landes wilkore' by Michael Kuchmeister in 1420.<sup>56</sup> It was read out 'with great solemnity' in the market squares outside the town halls.<sup>57</sup> These meetings also provided an

occasion for both Estates to submit their grievances to the Order. From the list of grievances submitted in 1408 and 1414 it can be seen that some prior consultation had occurred between the two Estates to hammer out a coherent series of articles of complaint.<sup>58</sup>

Ironically, it was the Order that first recognised the uses to which the Estates could be put in the service of its relations with other powers. The Estates of neighbouring territories could be used to cement treaties or alliance with their rulers. In 1386 the Order concluded an alliance with the neighbouring dukes of Pomerania and Stettin against Lithuania in return for 10,000m. A number of knights and the towns of Thorn, Elbing, Danzig, Lauenburg and Bütow sealed the treaty. The Order recognised the uses of the neighbouring Pomeranian Estates in keeping the dukes to their part of the bargain and used the Prussian Estates to give the guarantees the appearance of being bilateral.<sup>59</sup>

This was a game that two could play. In the Treaty of Lake Melno which concluded the war with the Poles of 1422, the Order had to concede a clause which, in the event of its waging aggressive war, it would release the Prussian Estates from their oaths of loyalty.<sup>60</sup> This clause was not a dead letter. In practice it meant a real degree of control by the Estates of the Order's policies. Late in November 1433 following the devastating Polish and Hussite invasion, the King of Poland issued a letter of safe conduct to members of the Order and several

representatives of the Estates.<sup>61</sup> On 15 December these plenipotentiaries produced a draft truce at Lentschütz-on-the-Warthe.<sup>62</sup> The efforts of two imperial envoys to thwart the conclusion of the truce in an interview in Thorn resulted in a tense confrontation between representatives of the Estates and the Grand Master and his officers

There was a Bürgermeister of Thorn called Hermann Rewsap who spoke for the others. He said 'Dear friends, are you all agreed on what I say here?' They shouted 'Yes!' Then he began and said to the Grand Master and the officers 'Gracious Lord and dear lords, the loyal knights and townsmen gathered here have ordered me to bid Your Grace and the officers to arrange peace since they have suffered war and gross insurmountable ruination for so long; if Your Grace will not do this, bringing us peace and quiet, Your Grace should know that we will take it upon ourselves, and we'll seek out a lord who will give us peace and quiet'<sup>63</sup>

Put briefly, Rewsap had reminded von Rusdorf of the realities of clause 24 of the Treaty of Lake Melno. On 21 December the Grand Master and the Estates sealed the Truce of Lentschütz which included a reaffirmation of the crucial clause in the treaty of 1422.<sup>64</sup> It was also the pressure put upon von Rusdorf by the Estates for a final 'eternal' settlement with the Poles that kept the Grand Master to the course of action that resulted in the treaty of Brest. Despite the objections of Sigismund, the German Master and the militant Livonian branch of the Order to the treaty, von Rusdorf continued to negotiate with the Poles. Essentially, he was hamstrung by the Estates half-hearted attitude towards

preparations for war. Even his efforts to put the towns into a state of defensive alert in the event of a Polish attack were a failure. He had to write three times to the council in Danzig asking them to put the town in a state of defensive readiness and to send soldiers to Schwetz.<sup>65</sup> At a meeting in Graudenz the towns of Culm and Thorn told the Grand Master to give up these preparations 'since they all knew that it had been agreed with the country that our lord will make no more wars, expeditions or alliances without the knowledge and consent of the towns and country'.<sup>66</sup> At the Diet held in Thorn on 24 December the Estates told the Grand Master that 'we have sealed a truce ... we mean to stay by it and not to depart from it'.<sup>69</sup> They also suggested that the Grand Master warn the Livonian brothers that if they did not wish to observe the truce then they must consider themselves to be on their own in the event of war - the Estates would not come to their assistance.<sup>68</sup>

More dangerously, from the point of view of the Order was the report in August 1435 that the commonalty in Thorn had decided to remain 'neutral' in the event of the Grand Master going to war with Poland.<sup>69</sup> The commander of Thorn reckoned that other Prussian towns were planning to do the same. Ominously, he reported that several of the most eminent members of the landed class had gathered together in the village of Niclosdorf in the commandery of Brattean under the pretext that one of them was going to buy the village, 'and they had

discussions and said that in no way would they go to war' (das si in keyner weise sich in keinen krig geben wollen).<sup>70</sup>

The degree to which relations between the Order and Estates had deteriorated into a realm of conspiracy and dire threats can be judged from the record of the Diet of Elbing dated 4 September 1435. The Grand Master requested the towns to put a stop to 'bickering' in the towns and promised in return that

if anyone could discover that one of his officers or a member of the Order is talking of the chopping off of heads or the like, it shall be made public and he will be judged like the lowest in the land.<sup>71</sup>

Taxation was the third area which acted as a forcing house for the development of representative institutions. Before the fifteenth century, the Order did not have to resort to general taxation. Money and marketable produce came in the form of rent and this, together with the profits of trade enabled the Order to use money in the service of its political ambitions. This felicitous circumstance changed after the battle of Tannenberg. As we have seen, the Order had to resort to general taxation in quest to find the sums required to buy off the Poles and its own mercenaries. Although with the exception of Danzig and Thorn, the Estates consented to a property tax of one shilling (1.2/3%) in the Mark, they used the opportunity afforded by the Order's supplications to give voice to a number of grievances against the regime.<sup>72</sup> There was little that the Grand Master could do about this unwelcome

broadside since underneath the talk of the taxes as being 'for the common good of the whole land' lay the stark fact of his being dependent upon the co-operation of the town councils in the actual raising of the taxes.<sup>73</sup> From the point of view of the lordship, the urban and landed Diets were held in order to ease the attempts of the lordship to open the purses of its subjects.

The Estates were quick to grasp that their very composition gave them a means of resisting unjustifiable, extortionate or crippling taxation. Taxes were proposed by the Grand Master. For example, in January 1423 Paul von Rusdorf asked the towns assembled in Elbing for their consent to taxation. The councils of the towns were to have a fortnight to consider the proposed taxes and then two delegates from each town were to return with the results of their deliberations.<sup>74</sup> In reality, of course, things worked rather differently. Both Estates recognised that the time between the conception of the tax proposals and action to sanction and collect them could be spun out in a way that would paralyse the Order's government.

This procedural technique whose working depended upon a consciousness of general territorial interests can be seen working to good effect in the late 1430s. In November 1431 the Grand Master put forward a detailed series of tax proposals.<sup>75</sup> The response of the Estates was lukewarm: they pledged



their assistance in an emergency but did not consent to the taxes. The Grand Master was not satisfied with this response and told them to discuss the matter further.<sup>76</sup> In another Diet five days later, the Estates - with the exception of the delegates from Thorn - agreed to the taxes but insisted that they be distributed in an equitable fashion. Too eagerly, the Grand Master agreed to hold yet another Diet to discuss this very point.<sup>77</sup> He was to be disappointed. Despite his attempts to convince the deputies of the seriousness of his intentions - he had initiated a tax of members of the Order - his efforts were to no avail since some of the delegates from the 'country' had not received adequate letters of commission enabling them to give their consent to the taxes.<sup>78</sup> At a further Diet in April 1432 the delegates merely decided to postpone the issue for another month while the landed gentry of the Culmerland and the town of Thorn said that they would have nothing to do with the matter.<sup>79</sup>

The Order's attempts to get the money from each locality on a piecemeal basis met with stony faced refusal couched in terms of the need for general consent. Although the commander of Balga proudly informed the Grand Master that he had collected the tax from the towns, 'simple freemen', and the German and Prussian peasants, he had had no luck with their social superiors who had refused to pay until the Culmerland had paid.<sup>80</sup> The Pfleger of Rastenburg reported that the 'worthy

people' had simply declared that 'what the whole land will do, they will not be against'.<sup>81</sup> The commander of Brandenburg reported in February 1432 that there was opposition to the tax in Balga - some of those who had stayed away from the Diet in Elbing said of those who had attended 'they drink out of gilded cups and fill their hands with pennies and give over our property'.<sup>82</sup> The commander of Elbing reported that while the landed classes of the commandery had nothing against the idea of helping their lord with a tax, they were not going to pay without the consent of the whole country first having been attained.<sup>83</sup> Again, as is clear from a letter dated 2 April 1432 from the commander of Balga, no one territory was going to pay the tax without the consent of the others

they will do everything that they should do but not before they have discussed the matter with the whole land. And they will not be the first to pay on account of the accusations of the other territories that they did so too easily and without the consent of the whole country.<sup>84</sup>

Moreover, as Elisabeth Wilke showed, in 1432 the Estates were able to capitalise on the financial straits of the lordship to the extent of securing the latter's agreement to a re-ordering of the tax structure.<sup>85</sup> Hitherto, the Order had fixed the rate of taxation to be paid by its own peasant tenants who therefore stood outside the classes represented in the Diets of the Estates, that is, those invested with a superior form of service and their own tenants. This circumstance meant

that sometimes the Order's 'own people' (unser eygenen leuthe) paid taxes at a different rate from their fellows who happened to have intermediate landlords. In an exchange of proposals for reforms dated 1432, the Grand Master first offered not to conduct any weighty matters of state, including war, alliances with other powers and taxes without the consent of his council.<sup>86</sup> The Estates countered by proposing that these matters should depend upon the consent of 'the commons of the country and towns'.<sup>87</sup>

Eventually the Grand Master and his officers hived off the proposals concerning parliamentary control of foreign policy from the tax issue and agreed that taxes should be levied only with the consent of the Estates.<sup>88</sup> The Order's separate negotiations with its own tenantry lapsed thereafter: the Estates represented the peasant tenants of the Order as well as their own.<sup>89</sup> From the early 1430s onwards, the Estates could claim, with some degree of accuracy, to be speaking on behalf of the whole land in both social and geographical senses. They had also discovered a powerful weapon: the inertia brought about by the endless regional and general consultations.

#### 4. The Formation of the Prussian Union and the response of the Order

The increasingly burdensome fiscal demands

made by the Order in the late 1430s, coupled with the internal strife that shook the corporation between 1436-1440 resulted in the formation on 13 May 1440 of the Prussian Union (Bund)<sup>90</sup> - an alliance of the major towns and landed freemen designed to protect their interests from the encroachments of the Order. Since this was to form the hard core of opposition to the Order regime in the following decade, it is necessary to be precise about the circumstances of its creation.

On 21 January and 14 February 1436 the Grand Master asked the Estates at Diets held in Elbing for 9,500 Gulden which he needed to fulfil the terms of the Treaty of Brest.<sup>91</sup> Since the towns effectively rejected the Grand Master's demands, he was forced to consider other fiscal measures. Already at a Diet held in Elbing on 28 January 1436 he had demanded two thirds instead of half of the profits of the mints in Thorn and Danzig which had been made over to the towns for a ten year period. The record of the Diet noted that there had been 'serious hard words and dealings' between the Order's officers and the townsmen; it particularly noted the 'ill-will and disfavour' of the Grand Master towards the towns 'and particularly those persons who did the talking concerning the trials and tribulations of the towns'.<sup>92</sup> At Diets held in April and May 1437 the Grand Master's reintroduction of an export embargo on grain - which was a disguised measure since the Order would

profit from the sale of letters of exemption - occasioned more angry exchanges.<sup>93</sup> On 9 May the townsmen asked the Grand Master to raise the embargo. He replied

he would not do it and said, as he had said at other Diets, that he had previously asked for aid and it was denied him, therefore he must take it upon himself to help himself and he had recently discovered charters in which his predecessors over a hundred years ago had granted licenses of exemption and these had been granted at a greater cost than his own, therefore they should think better of him than of his predecessors. And he said 'We would be poor lords if we didn't have the power to grant letters of exemption'<sup>94</sup>

The response of the Estates to Rusdorf's abrupt and threatening manner at these Diets was greater collaboration between towns and country and the formulation of long and coherent lists of grievances. In the autumn of 1437 the Grand Master travelled into the Culmerland which was an inflammable region, since the nobility there were well-disposed towards Poland and since the area was particularly liable to the depredations of invading Polish armies.<sup>95</sup> On 11 October the Estates of the Culmerland met von Rusdorf in Rheden. They produced a series of grievances which attacked what they regarded as the Order's systematic abuse of the terms of their Handfesten with regard to fishing and hunting rights, the coinage, land measures, mill monopolies and taxation.<sup>96</sup> The resulting argument took place over different versions of historical fact. For example the Culmerlanders argued that the towns of Culm and Thorn had been released

from all taxes on land and at sea by Duke 'Samborius of Pomerania'.<sup>97</sup> More boldly they claimed that 'We have been freed from all coercive taxation throughout the land by your lordship and by right we should be free from all taxes as far as your lordship stretches'.<sup>98</sup> The Grand Master informed them that 'he knew of no land that we had from Duke Samborius' and that Danzig - where the Pfundzoll was collected - had not passed into the Order's grasp by this route.<sup>99</sup> He also attempted to split the countrymen from their urban fellows by offering to confirm the privileges of the former separately. He was told 'Lord, you want to cut us off from the towns: we won't be cut off' (wir wellen ungescheiden sin).<sup>100</sup>

The totality of the attack and the solidarity of the two Culmerland Estates clearly worried the Grand Master. At a further Diet held in Marienburg in June 1438 he turned down a request for a Diet to hear the grievances of the Culmerland countrymen. He did not consider it 'advisable' (ratsam), to hold further Diets at that time and he lacked the services of his 'hawkish' subordinate, the commander of Elbing.<sup>101</sup> On 2 August he had personally to assure the inhabitants of the Culmerland that there was no truth in the rumour that he and the Marshal were planning to attack or arrest their parliamentary spokesmen.<sup>102</sup> The Estates were not convinced. In a letter dated 14 August 1438 the Grand Master turned down their own request for letters of safe

conduct for their deputies to a forthcoming Diet. Von Rusdorf found the request 'somewhat odd and strange' 'since we know of nothing towards you nor nothing of yours towards us on account of which we should issue letters of safe conduct, and therefore you may come freely and without fear in safety and in health to us and then from us as you have recently done'.<sup>103</sup> Despite its reassuring tone, the letter signifies the polarisation that had taken place between the Order and some of its subjects.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, the strife between the German and Livonian branches of the Order and finally the revolt of the three chapters of Königsberg, Balga and Brandenburg put the Estates in the position of honest broker. It also gave them a chance and cause to form a closer alliance to resist the arbitrary actions of the lordship and to press for reforms in a more coherent way.<sup>104</sup>

The correspondence of the officers of the Order in the spring of 1440 was much preoccupied with the apparent frequency with which gatherings of the Estates in the localities were being held. On 7 March the commander of Schlochau reported that he had been to a meeting of the towns and country in Conitz. He had asked them what their grievances were and why they were about to enter into a formal alliance with other areas for the protection of their liberties.<sup>105</sup> His brother officer in Graudenz reported a meeting of the Culmer-

landers in Liessau during which they had chosen three of their number who were to bring charters to a Diet in Marienwerder which the other territories would then seal. It was rumoured that a Union was to be formed 'so that they will be safe from your Grace and will not be in such danger as they have been for a long time from your Grace and yours'. He had also learnt that once the Union was formed, its first target would be the Pfundzoll.<sup>106</sup> What was taking place was being done in public and with the knowledge of the officers of the Order. The latter were welcome spectators at the public creation of an alliance, the goals of which were unimpeachably legal. The Union was not a hole in the corner conspiracy. The commander of Graudenz was told by Hans von Czegenburg that the Union was being formed with the Grand Master's knowledge. The members offered to send the Grand Master a copy of the charter of the Union. The commander advised the Grand Master to get hold of his own copy before the charter was sealed.<sup>107</sup>

On 14 March 1440 fifty-three Prussian noblemen and nineteen towns gathered together in Marienwerder to seal the charter of the Union (Bundesvertrag).<sup>108</sup> Of the former, 21 were from the Culmerland, 13 from Osterode, 7 from Christburg, 4 from Riesen<sup>u</sup>burg, 4 from Elbing, and 4 from Mewe and Dirschau - in other words the core of the aristocratic component in the Union came from the centre of the Ordensstaat on either side of the Vistula. Of the towns, seven were members of



the Hanse, including Danzig, Thorn, Elbing, and Königsberg and twelve others could be counted as smaller towns, for example Zinten or Rheden.<sup>109</sup> The main noble signatories were the local standard bearers and provincial judges - the foremost men in their localities; von Czegenburg, von Buchwald, von Krixen, and so forth.

At first sight, the treaty appears to be harmless enough from the point of view of the Order. It began with fulsome avowals of loyalty to the Grand Master and the Order. In the second article, however, their loyalty was made conditional upon the Order acting in accordance with the 'privileges, liberties and rights' contained in the Handfesten.<sup>110</sup> In the third article they slipped smoothly into a more revolutionary expression of thought. The Estates had long demanded a higher court of appeal in which they were represented, not merely to settle difficult legal issues, but, more importantly, so that grievances against the lordship could be heard by judges who were not either members or ciphers of the corporation.<sup>111</sup> The Order's original response to this demand made in the hard times in which it had then found itself in the 1430s. The corporation had needed money so concessions in this direction had had to be made. The first 'day of judgement', as the appeal court was called, had been set for 22 March 1433 and the dates future annual courts were to be fixed at this meeting. However, the Order's reluctance to agree to the latter in writing and its steadfast refusal to widen the composition of the court to include representatives of the Estates meant that the

scheme was doomed to failure.<sup>112</sup> Conflict over the issue was almost bound to occur since the Estates wanted to develop what they thought had been conceded while the lordship wanted to take several steps back from what it had rashly agreed to in a moment of financial weakness. The resulting impasse can be seen to good effect at the Diet of the Culmerland of 1437. The Estates claimed that an annual 'day of judgement' had been promised at which 'every man be he rich or poor may appeal concerning his lord if he has done him injustice'.<sup>113</sup> The Grand Master replied by pointing to the Estates refusal to accept what had been agreed concerning the 'day of judgement' and said - evading the issue - that in any case, everyone had his 'landrecht' 'if anyone has anything to do with anyone else' (hot ymand mit dem andern zu schaffen).<sup>114</sup>

Almost wilfully ignoring these difficulties, the signatories of the Treaty of the Union set out a system of appeals that was bound to be unacceptable to the Order. Where injustice had taken place, the aggrieved party should first appeal to the Grand Master. Failing satisfaction from him, one could then appeal to the court of appeal that was to be held once a year. Nothing was said, indeed nothing could be said, concerning its composition. If no satisfaction was obtained there, or if the court was postponed or otherwise interfered with, the aggrieved party could then appeal to the eldest knights of the Culmerland, if he were a knight, or to

the towns of Culm and Thorn if he were a townsman. Both of these groups could then summon other towns and countrysides to hear the case.<sup>115</sup> In effect, this meant that the Estates had arrogated the right of assembly and the highest jurisdiction in the land; no amount of talk concerning loyalty to the Order, however humbly expressed, could conceal the revolutionary nature of this article. Furthermore, the signatories stated that if force was used against any of them, they would first turn to the Grand Master, but, failing satisfaction from him, 'you shall discover that (force) is disagreeable to all of us' and that they 'would not leave it unre-  
venged' (und wellen das ... nicht laessen ungerochen). The two remaining articles also hinted at trouble to come. If any member got wind of anything that boded ill for the country, he was to inform the rest, and the members agreed to observe what was decided at Diets of the Estates.<sup>116</sup>

In a sense these demands amounted to the minimum content of the Union's programme. In other words they represented what the members thought they could get in the Spring of 1440. The maximum content - the issues that lay behind this rather restrained document - can be seen in documents constructed at a much later date to justify the Union retrospectively before international forums. A treatise of 1453 sought to justify the formation of the Union by pointing to the internal difficulties of the Order in the last years of the Rusdorf regime.

The Marshal had been forcibly deposed and the fortresses of the Order were bristling with armaments. The Union members had feared that the external enemies of the Order would rejoice (sich frolochten) at this disunity and that consequently they would sweep into Prussia bringing devastation and starvation with them.<sup>117</sup> Above all, they did not know what was happening so they banded together. While these were the short-term causes for the formation of the Union, the long-term causes amounted to a massive indictment of Order policy since the battle of Tannenberg; incessant war, fiscal oppressions, excessive labour services, injustice, and economic ruination were listed as having contributed to the formation of the alliance.<sup>118</sup> Although these things were not said in 1440 one must assume that these were the issues that the members of the Union had in mind. In a sense, the Treaty of the Union represented the least line of resistance.

Since the lordship was in considerable disarray in the Spring of 1440, the initial reaction of the Order to this new political force was very cautious. The Order's officers wanted to locate its roots and strength. For example, in a letter dated 16 March 1440, the commander of Osterode reported to the Grand Master that 'certain towns and their supporters' had 'sown an evil seed amongst the people' and that the men of Osterode were negotiating with the Culmerlanders.<sup>119</sup> In a letter dated 24 March, the Marshal reported conversations that he had had with Niclus Sparwyn and the mayor of Allenstein

concerning their attitude toward the Union. He was particularly concerned that the commanderies of Balga and Brandenburg should not join the Union and he was trying to fathom the attitudes of the smaller towns towards membership.<sup>120</sup>

After the death of von Rusdorf and the succession of Konrad von Erlichshausen a more subtle approach to the Union became evident. According to Murawski, the new Grand Master rejected a frontal attack on the Union in favour of a policy based on removal of the grounds for its existence: privilege could be used to counter privilege rather than force majeure. The more obvious conflicts of interest that existed between sections of the alliance could also be exploited.<sup>121</sup>

Owing to the success of the first part of his policy, the chance to try to dissolve the Union came late in the Grand Master's period of office. A fairly trivial dispute between the citizens of the Old and New towns of Thorn over the latter's right to mine clay within the liberty of the former resulted in the intervention of the Union on behalf of the Old Town. In fact, as the citizens of the New Town well realised, the dispute over clay was a pretext and what lay behind the intervention of the Union was the New Town's accommodating stance towards the Grand Master's poundage tax policy.<sup>122</sup>

The gauntlet was thrown down to the Union not by the Grand Master, but by Bishop Franz of Ermland. On 5 April 1446 he denounced the Union as being 'against

all spiritual and natural law and against the letter of papal and imperial ordinances and charters'. The sting was not substantially lessened by his offer to support the Union financially in a case to test the legality of some of the articles of the Treaty of the Union to be held in Rome.<sup>123</sup> There were many reasons why the bishop of Ermland should have been hostile to the Union. The town of Braunsberg, with which he was in dispute over his right to take issues that arose between him and the townsmen to courts outside Prussia, was a member of the Union. Considering their privileges to be under threat from the bishop, the Braunsbergers appealed to the Culmerlanders for protection.<sup>124</sup> There was also the fact that few noblemen from the see of Ermland could expect to enjoy the comforts of life in the cathedral chapter. At the Diet held in Marienwerder on 13 March 1440 the nobles complained that 'they (the cathedral chapter of Frauenburg), will take no more noblemen into their chapter', they said 'it would be a great shame' (eyne grosze schande), if this circumstance were not reformed.<sup>125</sup> Finally, Bishop Franz tried to use external, conciliar, authority to overturn a verdict in an inheritance dispute with Sander von Baisen on the grounds that he was not subject to secular courts.<sup>126</sup>

While Górski's claim<sup>127</sup> that the bishop's attack was carried out in concert with the Grand Master cannot be proven, it seems likely that we are dealing here with an early example of the Order's over-refined approach to the dissolution of the Union. A relatively independent

party - the choice of the fiery Franz was unfortunate - was employed to launch an apparently spontaneous attack of the Grand Master's conceiving, which the latter could then appear to soften. If this was the case, the Estates were not deceived. They immediately asked the Grand Master whether the bishop was speaking on his behalf. Von Erlichshausen replied vaguely about the dictates of the prelates' consciences.<sup>128</sup> A climb down on the part of the prelates which appeared to be of the Grand Master's doing, and which consisted of the public reading of a letter exuding pastoral solicitude,<sup>129</sup> was closely connected with an attempt by the Grand Master to dissolve the Union. On 9 June 1446 he admitted that there had been occasion for such an alliance under his predecessor but he thought that the reasons had vanished and that consequently the Union should be dissolved. He offered a charter in return for dissolution of the Union in which he promised that his officers would act more in accordance with the dictates of justice. If they did not, there would be no refuge for them in houses of the Order in or out of Prussia.<sup>130</sup>

This offer was followed by the holding of local assemblies designed to prise the Union apart. From the reports to the Grand Master sent in by officers of the Order, it is clear that they achieved some success. In a letter dated 19 June 1446 the commander of Danzig reported that the smaller towns in the vicinity of Danzig were ready to leave the Union. The townsmen of Leba had said 'that they did not know how they had entered the

the Union and that they were forced into it so that they had to seal' and would gladly leave it.<sup>131</sup> On 30 June the Marshal reported that the town of Allenburg had said 'they were so small, like a village and did not know anything about it, they wanted to keep their lords as their lords and whether it came tomorrow or today, if it came to it, they would serve their lords like poor folk as they had done at all times and asked that we should be gracious lords to them.'<sup>132</sup>

However most of the officers reported that the response had been to wait and see what the major towns or the small towns as a group did. In a letter dated 19 June 1446 the commander of Thorn reported that the council and jurors of Strassburg had finally told him that they would do whatever Culm and Thorn decided.<sup>133</sup> At an assembly held in Liessau, the Culmerland gentry informed the Vogt of Leipe that since the Union had been created 'with the agreement of the towns and country' it had to be dissolved in the same way.<sup>134</sup>

At a Diet held in Marienwerder on 17 July 1446 the towns not only rejected the Grand Master's plan for the dissolution of the Union<sup>135</sup> but worse, from the point of view of the Order, the small towns stated that they would stay with the Union 'through thick and thin' (is gynghe hogk adir seycht). Several factors probably contributed to this course of action. In an undated reply to propositions made by the commander of Elbing, the gentry informed him that they were afraid that if



they gave up the Union, this would lend some credence to the charge made by Bishop Franz that the Union was 'against the Faith', with all the grisly consequences for them that that admission might entail.<sup>136</sup> At the Diet in Marienwerder the towns said that bishop Franz had not abandoned his persecution of the Union.<sup>137</sup> They were also aware of talk being bandied about between members of the Order and their lay sympathisers concerning the use of force against them. The commander of Gollub was alleged to have said that 'if they will not leave the Union, they will be surprised and then they will have to leave it'.<sup>138</sup>

Given the failure of the oblique approach, von Erlichshausen sought to exploit the conflicts of interest that existed between town and country. In the Spring of 1447 the towns and country clashed over the issue of grain exports.<sup>139</sup> The country reckoned on better prices for their produce if western European competitors were allowed access to the hinterland. The townsmen spoke darkly of the dangers of inflation and starvation when in reality they meant that they wanted to maintain their monopoly position and their ability to act in accordance with other Hanseatic members if, as then was the case, they were in dispute with Western European interlopers.<sup>140</sup> But the major towns' troubles with the Dutch were not the concern of the landed classes. In a letter dated 17 April 1447 the Vogt in Leipe reported the mood in the Culmerland. There was 'great ill-will in the common man' towards the towns tampering

with the export of produce to suit their commercial and political ambitions. The 'common people' were liable to lobby the Grand Master in great numbers on this issue. They were likely to say things 'that will be hard for your Grace to hear' (die eweren gnaden swer werden seyn zcu horen).<sup>141</sup> The Grand Master's stance at the Diet held in Marienburg was symptomatic of what was in store

I learnt yesterday that at the recent Diet in Marienburg that the country used wild words against the townsmen and the townsmen against the country on account of the siglacio and that your Grace and your officers sitting there would not join in.<sup>142</sup>

At a Diet held in Elbing on 23 April 1447 the issue occasioned more harsh words between the two Estates. The delegates of the country again threatened that if the Grand Master acquiesced in the towns' demands to control outgoing shipping, they would begin mass lobbying of the Grand Master.<sup>143</sup> Following repeated consultations between the Estates, von Erlichshausen suggested a compromise; he would raise the embargo for five weeks and then the state of the harvest should determine what was to be done in future.<sup>144</sup>

The Danzigers attempt unilaterally to introduce a shipping ban in the Spring of 1448, the pirate war between Christopher of Bavaria King of Denmark and Eric the exiled King of Denmark who had turned Gotland into a robber's den served as the pretext, resulted in renewed action by the country against the towns.<sup>145</sup>

In a letter dated 6 June 1448 the Vogt in Leipe reported that the knights and gentry of the Culmerland had gathered in Liessau to discuss the baleful effects of the shipping ban.<sup>146</sup> At a meeting held in Marienwerder on 30 June 1448 the extent of the hostility of the country towards the major towns became apparent. They had gathered out of friendship's sake and 'not because of the Union'. They spoke of the 'great injuries and ruin' that the 'poor knights and gentry' had had to suffer on account of the quirky commercial policies of the Danzigers; 'we have no grievances against your Grace or your officers, but only against Danzig and the major towns'. They called for a Diet to discuss their problems. The Grand Master, to whom this music must have sounded very sweet, encouraged them to go on with their grievances.

dear gracious lord, we have not discussed or arranged any matter which might be against your Grace or your Order. We know of nothing else other than that we have been put off by the major towns for a good twenty years concerning the Dutch and other matters and on account of that we have been ruined. The Danzigers will permit no access, they will not let the Dutch and others into the country and forbid open markets, which has been to our great detriment. Your poor folk and the smaller towns have begged us to stay firm in the matter. The Danzigers taunt us and offer us 2 scot for the bushel and say 'the riding Junkers will easily take 2 scot for the bushel'.<sup>147</sup>

Advised by the commander of Elbing that Diets called by the Order had hitherto produced few positive results, and that the Order had little to lose,<sup>148</sup> von Erlichshausen agreed to hold a Diet in Elbing in mid-November.

On 15 November the country presented four articles of complaint; the Danzigers had illegally introduced a ban on shipping, they were engaging in sharp practice in the packing of salt, fish and other goods; they had extended credit to Polish producers in order to force down the price of Prussian grain and finally, the Danzigers were selling beer from Bromberg to the detriment of the local product.<sup>149</sup>

In order to capitalise upon the way in which the country had carefully separated its grievances from the issue of the Union, von Erlichshausen put forward a nine point addition to the existing territorial ordinances which included important concessions to the demands of the country. For example, the shipping bans were to be dependent upon the assent of the Order and both Estates, and annual market weeks were to be held in the towns. Alien traders were merely forbidden to deal amongst themselves: their presence was conceded.<sup>150</sup> The reaction of the towns to the project was unenthusiastic. The commander of Elbing reported in a letter dated 22 December 1448 that the word in Elbing was that the articles would result in the ruin of the bourgeoisie.<sup>151</sup> The commander of Thorn reported that the most respected citizens there were against the free market plan since they suspected that it was a plot being organised by unscrupulous officers of the Order and bishop Franz designed to enable the latter to off-load their allegedly enormous stocks of grain onto the market at great profit. The citizens also adamantly rejected attempts to induce

them to leave the Union.<sup>152</sup>

Indeed this was probably what von Erlichshausen was aiming for throughout these complicated proceedings - to split the major towns from the small towns and the towns as a group from the country as a sort of prelude to the dissolution of the Union. If this was in fact the Grand Master's intention, the plan fell to pieces in his hands at the Diet in Elbing. In a letter to the officers dated 31 October 1448 the Grand Master had asked them to re-float his project of 1446: a charter in return for the dissolution of the Union.<sup>153</sup> However at the Diet in Elbing in November, the delegates of the major towns took the precaution of interviewing their colleagues from the smaller towns before the session of the Diet commenced. In this meeting they learnt that the Grand Master had arranged to meet the men from the small towns an hour before he met their colleagues from the big towns. The result of this crucial meeting before the Diet was that both groups of towns resolved to act in accordance with one another: the Grand Master's efforts to deal separately with them as a prelude to dissolving the Union had come adrift.<sup>154</sup> Worse, as the letter from the commander of Thorn cited above suggests, the towns had discovered a way of patching up the conflict with the country in a way that would reflect ill upon the lordship. The open markets were a plot being organised for the benefit of greedy officers of the Order and the unpopular bishop Franz.<sup>155</sup>

Effectively, a skilfully conceived plan had turned to dust in the Grand Master's hands. The solidarity of the towns had been publically reinforced: the country had insisted from the beginning that the issue was what sort of market their product found and not the Union. At a Diet in Elbing on New Year's Day 1449 the Grand Master was forced to realise that his attempts to confuse the Union and the conflict of interest between the two Estates had failed. The towns repeated that the market scheme would ruin them and that consequently they could not accept it. In desperation the Grand Master asked how he was going to change what he had granted to the country. They after all, were claiming that they faced ruin if the markets were not permitted. Lamely he asked the towns to try out his scheme for a year. The delegates said that they had no letters of commission enabling them to give their assent to such a scheme.<sup>156</sup> The subtle approach to the dissolution of the Union had achieved nothing.

##### 5. Diplomacy, violence and the drift to war

The death of von Erlichshausen on 4 December 1449 was a crucial turning point in the history of the Order and the Union. One of the few genuinely attractive personalities in the higher ranks of the Order, he had done his best to keep in check his less moderate subordinates. In 1442 he wrote to his subordinates that

we have discovered that the brethren in the chapters have had wild and astonishing talks concerning the Union that our towns and the country have made. Since great ill-will and annoyance will result from this we ask you to earnestly beg the brethren in Chapter not to speak of the Union in this way ... so as to avoid the springing up of greater ill-will<sup>157</sup>

According to the Danziger Chronik vom Bunde the dying Konrad was alleged to have given his opinion to his brother officers concerning a suitable successor. With the perspicacity that the nearly dead are supposed to have he said, 'If you take Heinrich Reuss von Plauen, you'll certainly have war. If you take my nephew Ludwig, he will do what you want' (Nemet ir Russen von Plauen so habt ir eynen gewissen kriegk. Ouch nemet ir meinen vettern Ludwich, der mus wol als ir). He recommended the commander of Osterode, but exclaimed almost in the same breath 'What use is it, it is all in vain. I know very well that you have been together in the castle in Mewe and you have agreed that whichever of you will be Grand Master, he will destroy the Union and he shall also lose the country'.<sup>158</sup> Whether or not the dying Grand Master did say this, it was an accurate vision of the future. Konrad's nephew Ludwig, who had occupied a series of minor posts including one in the heart of the Culmerland, became Grand Master on 21 March 1450. What he lacked in political experience and maturity of character was to be supplied by his maternal uncle Heinrich Reuss von Plauen who, unfortunately for Ludwig and the Order, represented the most implacably conservative tendency in the Order.<sup>159</sup> The thirteen point agreement

at Mewe ensured that the new Grand Master was firmly in the grip of his reactionary 'subordinates'. The crew had changed and the ship set sail, deliberately, upon a collision course with the Union.

The new Grand Master and the Estates clashed virtually from the beginning of Ludwig's period of office. In a sense this could have been anticipated. The accession of Konrad von Erlichshausen had been marred by a dispute over the formula of the oath of homage, with the Estates being reluctant to swear allegiance to the corporation as a whole in addition to the Grand Master. Eventually they had agreed to swear allegiance to the Order to cover the inevitable vacancy between the death of one Grand Master and the election of a successor.<sup>160</sup> Konrad von Erlichshausen had realised that the issue was rather academic and that a quick resolution of it would forestall attempts by the Estates to use the situation to present interminable lists of grievances against the Order regime.

The personalities at work in the Order in 1450 lacked Konrad's cool manner and readiness to make timely concessions. Three Diets were necessary to resolve the question of the text of the oath and in the course of them tempers became frayed, trust disappeared and the little patience that Ludwig was blessed with disappeared. At the first Diet held in Marienwerder on 8 March 1450, the Estates decided that the text of the oath to be taken needed to be considered at greater length. They also spoke of grievances that were to be aired and that



the forthcoming Diet should be separate from the swearing of the oath which should take place during the Grand Master's customary perambulations in the localities.<sup>161</sup> In a letter dated 22 March 1450 the Grand Master asked the towns to discuss the oath and to send two delegates 'with full powers' to a Diet to be held in Marienburg.<sup>162</sup> However if it was his intention to hustle the problem out of the way in this fashion, he was to be bitterly disappointed. The resulting Diet became a comedy of errors. The Grand Master rehearsed his previous instructions and asked whether they had come with full powers. The Estates replied that there had been an oversight in the Grand Master's letter (das in dem umbeschreyben eyne vorsewmenisse were gescheen), and asked why he had not summoned the lesser knights and smaller towns as was customary on such occasions.<sup>163</sup> The Grand Master said that their presence was neither customary nor necessary. Following the Estates insistence upon this point, the Grand Master discussed the matter with his officers, searched his chancellery and questioned those of his scribes who had worked with his predecessor - they all agreed that the presence of the small towns and minor nobles was unnecessary. The Estates had in the meantime unearthed a record which seemed to prove that the small towns had been represented at the homage-taking of Konrad. The Grand Master - whose patience was wearing thin - replied that they could all come but that they had not been necessary to the procedure under Konrad. He disavowed the intention of introducing

'novelties' (wir gedencken ouch in deme keyne nwykeyt zcu machen), and asked them to chose two or three persons to discuss the oath. Following the Estates insistence on the presence of the small towns, the Grand Master sent a posse of senior officers, including the German Master, to them to say that he suspected that they were trying to postpone the ceremony of homage. Eventually, following mutual accusations of 'novelty-making' and mistrust, the Grand Master conceded the point.<sup>164</sup> Apparently trivial though the point may have seemed to Ludwig, it does reveal certain things about the Estates. Everything had to be done in the customary ways. They were intensely suspicious of any attempts by the regime to do anything differently - to steal a march on account of some slip of the pen - and they would wear down the regime with their procedural quibbles if they thought the point important enough.

At the Diet of 20 April 1450 the Estates delivered a sixty-one point list of grievances attacking the Order's fiscal policy and trading operations in a way that must have seemed time-honoured for both attackers and attacked. They also wanted the Grand Master to negotiate with them without the aid of public scribes and learned jurists.<sup>165</sup> They developed the grievance concerning the quarrels of Braunsberg with bishop Franz into a more general attack on the confusion of lay and ecclesiastical jurisdictions.<sup>166</sup> They wanted the Order to receive more local talent into its service.<sup>167</sup> The

clash over the formula of the oath still rankled. The Estates were 'very amazed' that something they had so 'fresh in mind' (in frischem gedechtnusse), as the presence of the small towns could have so easily slipped Ludwig's memory. They had not liked the 'dire threats' (swere ernste droueworth), contained in the Grand Master's Marienburg speech. The latter assured them that he did not have revenge in mind.<sup>168</sup> So the debate went on, with the Grand Master trying to get the formula of the oath agreed upon and the Estates prevaricating over this point in order to receive confirmation of their liberties and a firm commitment to the holding of an annual court of appeal. The Diet got off to a bad start over the question of the Grand Master's gaggle<sup>169</sup> of jurists, whose quick tongues and capacious memories probably got on their nerves. When the Estates asked that the latter should be shown the door, the Grand Master simply pretended that nothing had been said. Finally he answered haughtily

You request us to let our learned jurists go. Our learned jurists are our sworn counsellors and scribes and we need them in all of our business. You take counsel when you need it from foreign lordships and we don't speak to you about it.<sup>170</sup>

The Estates replied testily that in his predecessors' days it was customary for the jurists 'and the bishop of Ermland as well' to leave the chamber. The Grand Master re-stated his position and then cut them short with 'what do you say on the homage?' This effort to steer the debate into a channel of his own choosing

miscarried. Hans von Czegenberg drew the attention of the German Master to accusations that the Estates were trying to introduce novelties. Skilfully von Czegenberg lighted upon the fact that the German Master had omitted to hand out the gifts of money to lay court servants of the Order that were customary at such Diets. Two of the scribes had said that they knew nothing of such gifts. Pointing to venerable figures like Hans von Baisen, von Czegenberg told the German Master 'you are creating great mistrust in us and the good folk of this land on account of this, and we say yes, you'd better believe the whole country rather than your two scribes!',<sup>171</sup>

The Grand Master vainly tried to get the debate back on to the subject of the content of the Oath of homage. The atmosphere became tense. The Estates retreated into a huddle to consider each request (Sie troten zcurucke und stacketen die hopte zcusampne), the answers they were receiving were 'conceived in too few words' and as they left for yet more separate consultations, they thought they heard threatening words being spoken (Hie geschogen etczliche mehe wort in irem usgange, die sie vor eyne droynunge uffnomen). Following a short exchange on what had and what had not been threatened at the exit, the Estates agreed to the nomination of a committee of twenty-four to discuss their grievances. They wanted whatever the committee agreed to be set in writing by the Grand Master; the latter replied evasively that he would do so 'when necessary'. The oath of homage was

becoming conditional upon a charter confirming their liberties. The degree of mistrust implicit in the statement 'what was promised before has not been maintained' clearly infuriated the commander of Elbing Heinrich Reuss von Plauen 'the dead cannot answer and why did they unjustifiably accuse their dead lords? ... if they had nothing better to say about their deceased lords, they had better stay quiet' (sie mochten eyms solchen ouch wol sweygen). In a show of almost alarming clumsiness, the officers plunged in after with a pompous lecture on the Order's immunity from all jurisdictions beneath that of the Pope, adding haughtily that it 'would be a rare thing that now they should submit themselves to the jurisdiction of the towns of Culm and Thorn 'their subjects'.<sup>172</sup> The Estates replied that it was intolerable that the Order should have power over them without there being any immediate or cheap source of redress. Eventually, on 25 April, the Grand Master agreed to issue a charter, although he insisted that this was not necessary and that he did so merely as a gesture of good will. However what he offered in the charter was not really very much: an annual court of appeal with officers of the Order acting as judges. The Estates did not set much store by this. Finally they came back to the beginning, the question of the oath. The Grand Master wanted them to swear the oath that had been used in von Rusdorf's day; the Estates wanted the oath that had been sworn to Winrich

von Kniprode in the mid-fourteenth century. The Grand Master had ordered a search of all of the registers but could not find any trace of an oath other than that sworn to von Rusdorf. Faced with refusal, he compromised on the oath sworn to his uncle with its provision for interregna. On Sunday 26 April the Estates agreed to the proposed formula for the oath of homage.<sup>173</sup> It had taken six days to work this out and in those six days positions had been struck and words spoken that were not to be forgotten in a hurry.

The arrogant conduct of the officers of the Order and their insistence upon their status as the justiciables of the Pope alone may well have been in anticipation of the successful outcome of their secret attempt to crush the Union with the aid of an apparently spontaneous and impartial intervention in Prussian affairs by a papal legate. The Estates had suspected that such a plan was being considered as early as December 1448. A knight of the Culmerland had ventured to say that the proctors in Rome were working to acquire papal and imperial charters to destroy the Union. When told that he was deluding himself, Johan von der Leipen replied 'delusion or not, they are already in chests'.<sup>174</sup>

The background to the legation of the Portuguese bishop Louis Perez to Prussia in 1450 has been brilliantly investigated by Edith Ludicke. In brief she discovered that the Grand Master deliberately sought to mislead the Estates concerning the authorisation of the legation.

The bishop was to appear to be an unwanted, indeed unexpected, guest anxious to lay bare the sins of the Order as well as the Union. The Order could then cast itself as the saviour of the Estates. In fact, the legation was the product of the labours of the proctors of the Order and it was designed to smash the Union.<sup>175</sup>

In his address to the Diet in Elbing on 1 December 1450 the legate said that word had reached the Holy Father's ears of the conflict between lordship and subjects in Prussia and that the Pope was concerned about the consequent weakening of the Faith. In response to the misrule of the Order - a necessary concession - some of the subjects had banded together in an alliance that was against all imperial charters and the liberty of the Church.<sup>176</sup>

Other sources suggest that even though the Portuguese legate may have been even-handed in his intentions, his superior in Rome and his official hosts in Prussia were not. The former had written simultaneously to the rulers of the Empire, Poland and Masovia asking them not to receive political fugitives from Prussia.<sup>177</sup> The Grand Master and his officers had a plan of action in their possession - whose author was probably the bishop of Ermland - whereby the Grand Master was simultaneously to threaten the Union with the wrath of the Pope and his legate while appearing to be concerned to protect his subjects from the worst ecclesiastical sanctions. The grateful subjects would then dissolve

the Union, ironically, with the Grand Master's advice. Amongst the numerous refinements that this plan contained a few prominent features deserve notice. The senior officers of the Order and the prelates were to take up various positions in a meeting to be held with the country. To use a sporting analogy, the Grand Master was to play on the soft left wing - anxious to protect his subjects- while the commander of Elbing (clearly miscast), should play centre and the prelates should be out on the 'curialist' right wing. At all stages it was necessary to stress that it was the Order's connection with Rome that limited the room the Order had to make concessions on subjects such as the court of appeal. It was the Pope who stood in the way of a mixed bench of judges and not the Grand Master.<sup>178</sup> Ingeniously conceived - one is tempted to say the product of a paranoiac mind of the first class - the plan underestimated the tactical intelligence of the leaders of the Estates.

The record of the Diet of Elbing of December 1450 makes fascinating reading when one is aware of the existence of this plan. The Grand Master stressed that both parties were accused in the papal Bull - (Darumbe, syndt wir alle in der gedachten bullen werden beschuldiget und nymandt wirt auszgenomen) - and asked the Estates to consider their reply to the legate. Upon their return, the delegates blandly stated that they would have to discuss the matter with their 'elders'



at home. One delegate, Tylman von Wege could not resist the temptation to say that 'the lord legate should visit the unbelievers and Jews and other bad Christians in his home land of Portugal, of whom there were many, and not this land'.<sup>179</sup> In repeating his request for a speedy answer, the Grand Master said, no doubt unconscious of the irony involved, 'you may well understand (from the Bull) who your accuser is, and we think you will also recognise that the lord legate will not be accuser and judge'. Put briefly, the debate continued for days with the delegates of the Estates claiming that their letters of commission were inadequate for such a weighty business while the Grand Master stressed that the legate was the deputy of the Pope and as such, he ought to be given a speedy answer. The conduct of the legate gave weight to the Grand Master's point. In an interview with officers of the Order he complained about how his time had been wasted and that he was indisposed to remain in a country riddled with pestilence.<sup>180</sup> When he heard that the Order had prepared an answer for him, he raised his hands to heaven (hub uff der herre legat seyne hende in den hymmel), and praised the Lord that he had found such obedient sons of the Church. The Order's accommodating conduct increased the legate's impatience with the Estates. He called upon the Order as the holder of the secular sword to force the Estates to answer him.

Threatened with ecclesiastical censure, the

Estates recognised that sooner than later they would have to answer the legate. Following consultations with 'learned people', they reassembled in the presence of the legate in Elbing in the New Year of 1451. In their pièce justificatif they argued that the state of the Church in Prussia was the result of the repeated invasions by the Poles, Lithuanians and Tartars. They claimed they had done their best to restore the fortunes of the Church by inaugurating perpetual masses, rebuilding churches and founding new monasteries. Furthermore, they had ~~spilled~~ their blood (ir blut vorgossen han), in the service of the lordship and the Faith and had brought 100 miles of heathen territory in Samland, Lithuania and Russia into the orbit of the Christian world.<sup>181</sup> As for the Union, it had been formed to combat evil in the form of arbitrary power and they merely wanted to ensure that malefactors lay and clerical should be answerable to the appropriate judges. They had learnt that it was possible for the laity to apprehend criminous clerics and they believed that bishops should be answerable to their metropolitans.<sup>182</sup> Finally, they claimed that the Union was not unique; the Swiss had formed a Union to resist arbitrary rulers and to preserve peace (nue befinde wir, das in andern landen sint sunderliche statut und verbindunge umb frede zu behalten und gewalt zu vertreiben also under den Sweiczern, die do werden beheissen eidgenossen, zu den vele stete und land sich gesworen haben etc.).<sup>183</sup>

The legate was not prepared to concede these points. He concentrated his attack on their insistence that the Union was formed to ensure the answerability of malefactors. He told them 'you have been mistaught, by whoever taught you, your premiss is evil'. The law said that lay men could only detain clerics for three hours; how, he asked, was a bishop going to seek out his metropolitan in that time if the latter lived a hundred miles away? He said that he found it impossible to excuse their conduct to the Holy Father and added that 'many souls stood in danger and must be damned'.<sup>184</sup> This ringing condemnation served to throw the Estates into the arms of the Grand Master. They asked him to work on the legate so that he would accept their explanation of the origins and purpose of the Union, excuse them to the Pope and leave them alone. They were clearly worried by the increasingly hostile language being used in the Prussian pulpits and by the fact that they were being held in ill-repute in other countries.<sup>185</sup> The Grand Master then reported this new-found spirit of compromise to the legate who was persuaded that his mission was at an end. In one of his last communications with the Estates, the legate said that the Grand Master had convinced him there was reason to think the troubles were at an end - the reasons were left unspecified - and therefore he would do his best to sweeten the ill-will of the Pope. His parting remarks show that he found this sudden turn-around perplexing; for his part, he said, he would have carried out the ecclesiastical

censures since he thought that the Estates and the Union were hell-bent on their evil course.<sup>186</sup> These were the words of a man who had been thoroughly and efficiently made use of without actually having realised it.

While the legate was still in Prussia, it was rumoured that the members of the Union had put out feelers towards the King of the Romans Frederick III. On 1 January 1451 the Grand Master wrote to the provincial commander of Austria instructing him to work on the Order's behalf at the court in Vienna.<sup>187</sup> In the months that followed the Order came round to the idea of seeking the condemnation of the Union not exclusively by the Pope but by either the King of the Romans, the College of Cardinals or the princes of the Empire. Paradoxically, the Grand Master even suggested in August 1452 that a college of four persons - two from the Order and two from the Estates - could argue the question of the legality of the Union, with the right of appeal to the various authorities mentioned above should either party require it.<sup>188</sup> This college would have effectively conceded precisely the type of mixed lay and spiritual jurisdiction the very mention of which in the Union charter had so exercised the lordship in the past.

The members of the Union threw themselves into the preparation of a case against the Order with great enthusiasm. In a letter dated 20 September 1452 the Vogt in Roggenhausen reported that he had heard that

the Estates were to send four delegates to Vienna with 'a register and a book concerning all of these matters and they will accuse your Grace shamefully, burdensomely, angrily and not to the good'.<sup>189</sup> In a letter dated 25 September the commander of Thorn reported that the four delegates had been in Thorn to collect money for the journey to Vienna and that while they were in Culm 'they had three scribes with them who had no peace day and night, but wrote down the grievances and accusations which were brought to them concerning things from the time of Tannenberg upto the present day'.<sup>190</sup> These grievances were to be used to justify the formation of the Union. Rumours abounded that the Grand Master was planning to use Bohemian troops and that the Marshal had been inquiring in his territories to find out on which side of the fence people were going to stand in the event of war. The Union sent out roving emissaries to canvass the legal faculties of the universities of Leipzig, Erfurt and Cologne and tried to acquire the services of more jurists in Vienna. The latter effort proved to be in vain since the Order had ensured that all of the likely jurists were spoken for.<sup>191</sup>

Sometimes the emissaries were able to report that a combination of the wealth that their home towns could dispose of and the venality of the court in Vienna had produced advantageous results. In a letter dated 30 March 1453, the former Bürgermeister of Thorn Tilman

von Wege reported to the council of Thorn that he had had three important privileges drafted for presentation to the Emperor. He hoped for a favourable outcome but said that 'it will cost money'.<sup>192</sup> One of these privileges, issued on 22 December 1452 granted the 'country' and towns of Prussia the right to hold assemblies to prepare their case and, more importantly, to raise a tax in order to cover the inevitable costs that they were about to encounter (das sy under in ain zymlich schazung und schosz mugen aufsetzen).<sup>193</sup>

The preparations of the Order for the forthcoming case were predictably rather less straightforward. In Rome the proctors were set to work on the papal Curia to frustrate the machinations of the Polish episcopacy on behalf of the Union. A Bull was to be sent to the Polish prelates warning them that the Union was against the liberty of the Church. The Grand Master also endeavoured to make the appointment of a new archbishop of Gnesen conditional upon the candidates promise not to support the Union.<sup>194</sup>

Nonetheless, these efforts at long-range guile were thwarted by a clumsily executed attempt to abduct or murder the emissaries of the Union whilst they were en route to the imperial court in June 1453. Whether or not the authorship of the kidnap attempt can be traced back to the Order, the incident convinced the Union members that they were engaged in a power struggle whatever the outcome of the case in Vienna. In a letter

dated 20 July 1453 the bishop of Pomesania informed the Grand Master that the Union members 'hold your most powerful Grace in suspicion' (das sie euwer groszmeckticheit in verdechtnisz haben), and that they were going to send 1,500 horsemen to rescue the surviving delegates.<sup>195</sup> In a report dated 22 July the commander of Graudenz said that the wounded Gabriel von Baisen had written home accusing the commander of Elbing of having acquired mercenaries to use against the Union and the Vogt of Leipe of having been involved in the Moravian ambush.<sup>196</sup> Finally, in a letter dated 24 July 1453, the Marshal reported that it was rumoured in Königsberg that a brother of the commander of Elbing had arranged for the Union delegates to be waylaid in Moravia.<sup>197</sup> The combination of over-refined diplomacy of apparently limitless complexity and the use of incalculable violence was becoming characteristic of the Erlichshausen regime.

Very little was new in the arguments that formed the resulting imperial judgement. The Emperor declared that the Union had been created illegally and that therefore it should be dissolved.<sup>198</sup> In a way, this verdict had become academic. As the letters from the officers of the Order recording some of the utterances of members of the Union demonstrate, the question of the Union's existence would have to be resolved by armed might.

From the Autumn of 1453 the correspondence

of both members of the Union and officers of the Order was increasingly preoccupied with military matters. It is clear that the townsmen feared an attack from the castles of the Order in their midst. On 17 August 1453 the council of Culm asked their colleagues in Thorn for a man who would see to their weaponry and an armourer to clean their harness.<sup>199</sup> In a letter dated 19 August the commander of Danzig reported that the citizens had asked him to stop the build-up of troops in the Order fortress.<sup>200</sup> In January 1454 the commander of Thorn reported that the citizens had become extremely anxious when the commander had started to construct wooden covers in the refectory to protect the Order's cannon.<sup>201</sup>

Not only the conduct but the very efficiency of the Order must have contributed to the feeling of menace that is so evident in the letters of the townsmen and their allies. None of the Union members could move and no one could meet without the knowledge of the officers of the Order. For example, on 26 August 1453 the Canon of Frauenburg wrote to the Grand Master naming all of the members of the Union who had been present at a meeting in Graudenz.<sup>202</sup> On the following day, the House-commander of Balga listed those present according to their territorial origins and sent his list to the Grand Master.<sup>203</sup> It was a regime that recorded not merely the movements of its opponents but even how the latter appeared to feel on a given day. In a letter



dated 26 August 1453 the House-commander of Thorn reported that two of the Baisen brothers had recently crossed the Vistula and that they were 'very sad and not very happy' (gar trawrick und nicht frolichen).<sup>204</sup> In a report dated 10 October the Grand Master was kept upto date on the state of health of Tilman von Wege and told of a suspicious looking chest that Stibor von Baisen had sent to his brother Hans.<sup>205</sup> Expert in the rapid and regular delivery of the post themselves, the Order had little apparent difficulty in discovering the contents of letters which passed to and fro between their enemies. On 15 November 1453 the commander of Thorn wrote to the Grand Master relaying the contents of a letter which the Thorn delegates in Prague had sent to their council.<sup>206</sup> On 8 December 1453 the commander of Tuchel sent the Grand Master a copy of a letter which the delegates of the Union had sent to Thorn and which was being forwarded to Tuchel.<sup>207</sup>

This type of intensive surveillance - which presumably relied upon a twilight world of spies, thieves and informers - was no doubt positively terrifying if considered alongside the reported utterances of high-ranking officers of the Order and their sympathisers. On 12 December 1453 the delegates of the Union in Vienna reported to the council of Thorn that Peter Knorre, an advocate of the Order, had said that 'we were all pagans and that we were won by the sword and therefore we were more like serfs or people one bought. And our forefathers

did not help win the country, but they (the Order) had won it and thus they will have us as serfs. And bishop Franz said, amongst other things, how the Union was against God, honour and the law and he would grieve over it into his grave (und welde im gram seyn bis in seyn grab)'.<sup>208</sup> In a letter dated 12 November 1453 Ramschel von Krixen wrote to Hans von Baisen informing him that he had heard that members of the Order had said that 'it will never be right in Prussia until three hundred of you are put to the sword (is wirt nymmer gut im lande zcu Prewssen, ir dreyhundert springen denne ubir die klinge), since the others are simple people and are led on by those three hundred'.<sup>209</sup> Given the obsessive way in which the Order watched and recorded every move of its opponents, these threats had to be taken seriously. Whether or not the Order was planning to kill its opponents, the latter certainly believed that the corporation would have few scruples in doing so. In a letter dated 20 January 1454 the Grand Master reassured Hans von Baisen that he had not paid an assassin to murder him (vom leben zcum tode brengen), and denied having sent a Vogt to Soldau with the assassin's fee. The Grand Master went to great lengths to point out how damaging such rumours might be.<sup>210</sup> His efforts were probably in vain. In the eyes of its opponents, the Order was capable of almost anything; murder or colossal corruption (the imperial verdict was alleged to have cost 80,000 Gulden), to secure its ends.

Predictably, the more measures the Union took to prevent a surprise attack, the more the senior officers of the Order suspected that they themselves were about to be overrun. In a letter dated 30 November 1453 the commander of Elbing reported that 'they (the Union), mean to overrun six or eight castles and then to take the field.'<sup>211</sup> The commander of Balga reported that the smaller towns were agitating amongst the Prussian and German peasants, telling them that the Order was planning to introduce an excise and to increase their labour services.<sup>212</sup> Each fresh piece of news or rumour served to increase existing tensions. In a letter dated 10 January 1454 the commonalty of Preussisch-Holland told the Grand Master that the House-commander had summoned some of their number and had threatened them with severe head injuries. He had also ceased to pay his debts and had shouted hostile words to the watchmen from out of the refectory window.<sup>213</sup> The two sides faced each other like hostile armies on the battlefield. In a letter dated 22 January 1454 the commander of Thorn reported the willingness of the Estates to attend a Diet as a last ditch effort to avoid war. It was likely, he went on, that the Estates would require the Order to give hostages to ensure the safety of the delegates of the Estates.<sup>214</sup> Finally, on 4 February 1454 the leaders of the Union gathered together in Thorn sent a town servant to Marienburg with a letter of defiance addressed to the Grand Master.<sup>215</sup>

One hostile source contains a very lively description of the initial attacks on the houses of the Order. While the Thorn town servant whiled away the better part of a day in Marienburg with the letter of defiance on his person, the Union managed to persuade three officers of the Order to come to Thorn to negotiate with them. In this way the Marshal and the commander of Graudenz fell into the hands of the Union before a shot had been fired. All three were paraded through Thorn where they were subjected to insulting finger gestures by the citizenry (durch alt und jung lesterlich vingerczeyet).<sup>216</sup> Within a month and as a result of the Order's predilection for large numbers of lay servants, every fortress of the Order excluding Marienburg, Stuhm and Konitz was in the hands of the Union.<sup>217</sup> Some of the officers of the Order decided that it was time to cut their losses and run. The House-commander of Preussisch-Holland made off with the commander of Elbing's money and renounced his Order. Some of his colleagues were not so lucky. The Pfleger of Rastenburg Wolfgang Zawr was drowned and in other houses the priest-brothers of the Order were robbed of their habits. The hated commander of Elbing was given a safe conduct out of Preussisch-Holland but was then ambushed by a band of Bohemians bent on winning the hundred Gulden that the Elbingers had offered for von Plauen 'dead or alive' (tod ader lebendig).<sup>218</sup> Although badly wounded, the commander managed to leave a pair of Bohemians on

the field and finally dragged himself into Marienburg. Throughout, the author of this rather racy description could barely conceal his sense of fury that it had been the 'worthy people' leáđ by men linked to the lordship by ties of service and in receipt of the Order's gold - such as the Baisen's - who had so thoroughly betrayed the corporation. Writing in the white heat of fury and with his imagination seeking words to capture the enormity of the offence (the rheumatic Baisen is referred to as a 'damned lame basilisk) - he did not stop to ponder why the most eminent men in Prussian society had become so totally alienated from the regime of the Order.

The answer to this question is partly to be found in the various privileges which King Kasimir of Poland granted to the Prussian Estates following their decision to offer him the lordship of Prussia. In the 'Charter of Incorporation' issued on 6 March 1454 in Cracow, the King granted the Estates the right to participate in the election of Polish kings and the rights of the Polish nobility. He confirmed their existing privileges and raised the poundage tax. He granted that castles and offices in Prussia should only be occupied by natives.<sup>219</sup> In effect, he allowed them a particular local administration joined to Poland solely in the person of the King. The country was divided into four Woywodschaften, Culmerland, Königsberg, Elbing and Pomerelia, with a Governor, Hans von Baisen at the head of the administration.<sup>220</sup> In a further series

of privileges, the King rewarded those who were about to make the greatest financial sacrifices on his and their own behalf. In a privilege dated 16 June 1454 Casimir granted Danzig which 'had been bound under the yoke of service to the crusaders' (den krewczigern mit dem yoch der dinste vorbunden woren), the income from a number of villages in its vicinity as well as the rents and mill-profits from the Altstadt and Jungstadt. In return they had to pay Casimir 2,000 Gulden a year, accommodate him and his retinue for three days a year and build him a court and stables for two hundred horses.<sup>221</sup>

In a further privilege dated 9 July 1455 the Danzigers were granted the right to introduce taxes as often as they liked (wir hoffte und dicke sie daz zcu irer und iren steten notdorfft, nutcze und fromen irkennen werden, uffsetczen und nedirlegen noch irem besten gutduncken).<sup>222</sup>

Finally, all important affairs were to be dealt with by a territorial council consisting of seven representatives of respectively the towns and country.

#### 6. The Order and the Estates evaluated

Although it was to take a war of thirteen years duration to rid West Prussia of the debris of the German Order,<sup>223</sup> this seems a fitting point to attempt an evaluation of both the Order and its opponents. The hostile characterisation of the Union and its leading lights that we have seen in the sources of the Order was

destined to endure in historical literature. Writing on the eve of the National Socialist take-over of power, Christian Krollmann, the only twentieth-century German scholar to deal at length with the history of the Order in the fifteenth century, took the tract 'The Grounds for the Union' as a yard-stick to measure the charges raised against the Order. An exact and solid scholar, Krollman was not impressed by the Union case. The poundage tax had been introduced by the towns and they had enjoyed some of the fruits of it. The complaints of injustice made by individuals were the result of an up-dating of privileges rather than their conscious infraction. The government of the Order was no worse than the regimes in other German states or in Poland. The lower classes of the towns had stayed loyal to the Order, moved by 'national feelings' rather than the profit and the loss that allegedly motivated the patricians. He concluded that it 'was merely the ruling councils of the towns and the polonised nobility of the Vistula delta who lead the struggle' against the Order. In his search for the single cause of the downfall of the Order, Krollmann came upon something like the notion put about by von Treitschke in the latter's social-Darwinian piece of pseudo-scientific nonsense written in 1862; the Empire was weak and so Prussia, and then Silesia and the Lausitz had fallen under the 'general westwards march of Slavism'.<sup>224</sup>

In the years that followed, these ramblings of

nationalistically-minded academics were to be met half way by the myths of the past conjured up by a revolutionary and ahistorical regime. The German educated public could no doubt sleep sounder in the knowledge that the leading practitioners of mechanized violence in the ravines of Russia and the woods of Silesia had included the German Knights (along with the Japanese Samurai, the Spartans, the Jesuits and the Freemasons), in their row of historical exemplars.<sup>225</sup>

More recently, the victory of the Estates has been condemned by historians writing in a rather different political tradition. In the hands of Marxist synthesisers, the creation of the Union, out of groups with antipathetic economic interests; the struggle over questions of privileges and liberties, and the Union's dogged resistance to the tyrannical and grasping regime of the Order are passed over in conspicuous silence. A 'military bureaucracy' was replaced by 'a single junker class'; fugitive peasants could be hanged without trial or nailed by the ears to the pillory, with a knife to cut themselves off.<sup>226</sup>

In a sense, both the Order and the Estates deserve to be evaluated more in terms of their own time. The Order was subject to the ideas and social forces active in the German aristocracy of the later Middle Ages. Faced with financial ruin occasioned by war, it attempted to override the privileges, liberties and historical traditions of the Prussian Estates. This



in turn highlighted the alien and anachronistic nature of the regime whose proverbial efficiency contributed to its reputation for tyrannical government. In any case, the opponents of the Order were more interested in its capacity for injustice and murder than whether its postal system was efficient or whether the brothers represented the apogee of bureaucratic selflessness. Isolated in Prussia and far from its benefactors and supporters in the Reich, the regime was destroyed by an alliance of urban patricians and landed noblemen who thought of defending their privileges than of questions of German self-consciousness or national betrayal when they turned to the Poles. Since the Estates shared the patrimonial and authoritarian attitude of the Order towards the peasantry and urban lower classes it is anachronistic to judge them solely in the light of the fate of these two classes. As Otto Hintze said, the Estates represented the privileged and it is in terms of their defence of those privileges that their effectiveness should be assessed.<sup>227</sup> The Prussian Union was not formed to defend the interests of peasants, indeed, the latter, including the village rich of Schulzen and innkeepers, were specifically excluded from it.<sup>228</sup> That fact, of course, does not make the Union (or the Estates), less interesting as a political phenomenon.

NOTES

1. R. Grieser, Hans von Baysen, Ein Staatsmann aus der Zeit des Niederganges der Ordensherrschaft in Preussen, Deutschland und der Osten, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen ed. H. Aubin, A. Brackmann, M. Hein, J. Papritz, G. Randt, W. Recke, H. Ueberberger (Leipzig 1936), 4, p. 113; E. Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht im Ordenslande Preussen und das mittelalterliche Europa, Veröffentlichungen der Niedersächsischen Archivverwaltung (Göttingen 1955), 6, p. 261; W. Rautenberg, 'Der Verkauf der Marienburg 1454-1457', Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes, Festschrift für Erich Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg 1963), p. 142.
2. SRP 4, p. 144; Rautenberg, 'Der Verkauf', p. 126.
3. SRP 4, pp. 164-165.
4. Rautenberg, 'Der Verkauf', pp. 139-141.
5. Ibid., p. 141.
6. Ibid., p. 127.
7. SRP 4, p. 172.
8. Ibid., p. 175; for Blumenau's university career see H. Boockmann, Laurentius Blumenau Fürstlicher Rat-Jurist-Humanist (ca. 1415-1484), Göttinger Bausteine zu Geschichtswissenschaft, ed. Heimpel, Nurnberger, Roos, Schnath, Schramm, Wenskus, Wittram (Göttingen 1965), 37, p. 31.
9. Rautenberg, 'Der Verkauf', p. 140.
10. SRP 3, p. 686.
11. Rautenberg, 'Der Verkauf', p. 135.
12. SRP 3, p. 686.
13. SRP 4, pp. 172-173; p. 180; p. 184 for the expulsions.
14. Rautenberg, 'Der Verkauf', pp. 133-134.
15. E. Weise, ed., Die Staatsverträge des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen im 15. Jahrhundert (Marburg 1955), 2, no. 343, pp. 194-205.

16. Rautenberg, 'Der Verkauf', p. 139; Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht, p. 253.
17. K. Górski, 'La Ligue des Etats et les origines du Régime représentatif en Prusse', Studies presented to the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions Album Helen Maud Cam (Louvain/Paris 1960), 1, p. 176; ASP 1, p. 4; A. Werminghoff, Der Deutsche Orden und die Stände in Preussen bis zum zweiten Thorner Frieden im Jahre 1466 Pfingstblätter des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins (München und Leipzig 1912) 8, p. 15; Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht, p. 55f.
18. ASP 1, nos. 51, p. 83; 52, p. 85; 60, p. 92; 67, p. 99; 69, p. 101 etc. The number of delegates varied. In 1403 Thorn sent 2, Elbing 3, Königsberg 2 and Danzig 2, see ASP 1, no. 69, p. 101. In 1407 Thorn sent 4, Elbing 2, Braunsberg 2, Königsberg 2 and Danzig 3, see ASP 1, no. 76, p. 107.
19. ASP 1, nos. 10, p. 31; 30, p. 49; 55, pp. 87-88 etc.
20. Ibid., nos. 16, pp. 34-35; 23, pp. 40-41; 24, pp. 41-42; 25, pp. 42-43; 42, pp. 67-68 etc.
21. Ibid., nos. 36, pp. 57-58; 37, pp. 60-61; 39, p. 62 etc.
22. Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht, p. 55.
23. ASP 1, no. 151, p. 192.
24. Ibid., no. 289, p. 365.
25. Ibid., nos. 250 4, 9, 13, pp. 308-309; 282, pp. 342-343. This reinforces the view of Otto Hintze that 'der ältere ständische Staat ein politischer Herrschaftsverband von mehr oder minder stark patrimonialer Struktur ist', see his important article 'Typologie der Ständischen Verfassungen des Abendlandes', Historische Zeitschrift (1930), 141, p. 231.
26. ASP 1, no. 287 3, p. 362.
27. R. Wenskus, 'Das Ordensland Preussen als Territorialstaat im 14. Jahrhundert', Der Deutsche Territorialstaat im 14. Jahrhundert, ed. H. Patze for the Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für mittelalterliche Geschichte (Sigmaringen 1970), 1, pp. 353-354.
28. Ibid., p. 379.

29. ASP 1, pp. 9-10; M. Töppen, 'Der Deutsche Ritterorden und die Stände Preussens', Historische Zeitschrift (1881) 46, p. 434; Wenskus, 'Das Ordensland Preussen', especially p. 368. See also H. Plehn, 'Zur Geschichte der Agrarverfassung von Ost- und Westpreussen' Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte (1904) 17, p. 59.
30. Töppen, 'Der Deutsche Ritterorden und die Stände Preussens', p. 435.
31. K. Górski, 'Les Débuts de la Représentation de la Communitas Nobilium dans les Assemblées d'États de l'est Européen', Standen en Landen (1968) 47, p. 49.
32. R. Grieser, Hans von Baysen, p. 124 note 1.
33. ASP 1, no. 59, p. 91.
34. Ibid., no. 74, pp. 105-106.
35. ASP 2, no. 396, pp. 633-634.
36. F. Gause, 'Geschichte der Landgerichte des Ordenslandes Preussen', Altpreussische Forschungen (1926) 3, p. 11.
37. F. Gause, 'Organisation und Kompetenz der Landgerichte des Ordenslandes Preussen', Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1922) 59, pp. 210-233.
38. Gause, 'Organisation und Kompetenz', pp. 127-128; 'Geschichte der Landgerichte', p. 44.
39. Gause, 'Organisation und Kompetenz', pp. 133-134.
40. Gause, 'Geschichte der Landgerichte', pp. 13-14.
41. ASP 2, no. 391, p. 628.
42. ASP 3, no. 171, pp. 390-391.
43. ASP 3, no. 389, pp. 650-651.
44. Short biographies of these men may be found in Gause, 'Geschichte der Landgerichte des Ordenslandes Preussen' on respectively pp. 26-27; p. 30; p. 37; pp. 41-42; p. 46; pp. 50-51; pp. 58-59; p. 61.
45. M.H. Keen, England in the Later Middle Ages (London 1973), p. 12. citing The Chronicle of Walter Guisborough, ed. H. Rothwell (Camden Society (1957), p. 216, note d.
46. ASP 4, no. 17, pp. 29-30; A. Werminghoff, 'Der Deutsche Orden und die Stände', p. 54.

47. ASP 2, no. 322, pp. 475-476.
48. SRP 4, p. 411.
49. SRP 3, p. 656; Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht, pp. 118-119, note 7.
50. SRP 4, p. 126; Gorski, 'Les Débuts de la Représentation', p. 47.
51. SRP 4, p. 413.
52. ASP 1, no. 50, pp. 81-82.
53. ASP 1, no. 51, pp. 83-84.
54. ASP 1, no. 47, pp. 76-78; see also no. 43, pp. 69-70 on the abduction of women.
55. ASP 1, nos. 220, pp. 274-275; 225, pp. 278-279; 226, pp. 280-281; 227, pp. 281-282.
56. ASP 1, no. 286, pp. 348-361.
57. ASP 1, p. 347.
58. ASP 1, no. 79, pp. 110-111; no. 186, pp. 239-242; E. Blumhoff, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte und Entwicklung der Westpreussischen Stände im 15. Jahrhundert' Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1894) 34, p. 10.
59. ASP 1, pp. 14-15; no. 30, p. 49; Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht, p. 114f; Gorski, 'La Ligue des Etats', p. 176; Blumhoff, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte', p. 11.
60. Die Staatsverträge des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen im 15. Jahrhundert, ed. E. Weise for the Historischen Kommission für ost- und westpreussischen Landesforschung (Marburg 1970<sup>2</sup>) 1, no. 154, 24, p. 163; C.A. Lückcrath, Paul von Rusdorf Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1969) 15, p. 47; Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht, pp. 113-114.
61. ASP 1, no. 473, p. 611.
62. Lückcrath, Paul von Rusdorf, p. 156; Weise, Die Staatsverträge 1, no. 176, pp. 189f.
63. ASP 1, no. 476, p. 615.
64. Weise, Die Staatsverträge 1, 18, pp. 193-194; Lückcrath, Paul von Rusdorf, p. 156.

65. ASP 1, nos. 519, p. 659; 520, p. 659; 522, p. 660.
66. ASP 1, no. 523, p. 660.
67. ASP 1, no. 524, p. 662.
68. ASP 1, no. 524, p. 663.
69. ASP 1, no. 540, pp. 692-693.
70. ASP 1, no. 540, p. 693.
71. ASP 1, no. 541, p. 694.
72. ASP 1, no. 112, pp. 158-160; Gorski, 'Les Débuts de la Représentation', pp. 44-45; Töppen, 'Der Deutsche Ritterorden', pp. 437-438.
73. ASP 1, no. 114, p. 162.
74. ASP 1, no. 320, pp. 403-404.
75. ASP 1, no. 406, pp. 543-544; Gorski in 'La Ligue des Etats' saw the significance of these years ('Il semble donc qu' on doit fixer l'instauration réelle du régime représentatif en Prusse à 1432. Ce n'est qu' alors que les états, en résistant à une guerre injuste, réussirent pour la première fois à imposer leur volonté à l'Ordre'), p. 179 but he did not analyse the procedural mechanics nor the consciousness of common territorial interests antipathetic to the interests of the Order that made the 'opposition' so effective in 1431-1432.
76. ASP 1, no. 407, p. 545.
77. ASP 1, no. 407, pp. 546-547.
78. ASP 1, no. 411, p. 549.
79. ASP 1, no. 424, pp. 563-564.
80. ASP 1, no. 409, pp. 547-548.
81. ASP 1, no. 413, pp. 552-553.
82. ASP 1, no. 414, p. 553.
83. ASP 1, no. 420, pp. 557-559.
84. ASP 1, no. 421, pp. 559-560.
85. E. Wilke, 'Die Ursachen der preussischen Bauern- und Bürgerursachen 1525 mit Studien zur ost-preussischen Agrargeschichte der Ordenszeit',

- Altpreuussische Forschungen (1930), 7, p. 46.
86. ASP 1, no. 431, p. 573.
  87. ASP 1, no. 432, p. 574.
  88. ASP 1, no. 433, p. 575.
  89. Wilke, 'Die Ursachen', p. 47.
  90. ASP 2, pp. 283-289; Töppen, 'Der Deutsche Ritterorden', p. 440. Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht, p. 138f.
  91. ASP 2, nos. 4, p. 4; 5, p. 5.
  92. ASP 2, no. 4, p. 5.
  93. ASP 2, no. 27, p. 27.
  94. ASP 2, no. 29, p. 30.
  95. ASP 1, p. 11f.; Blumhoff, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte', pp. 16-19. R. Wenskus, 'Der deutsche Orden und die nichtdeutsche Bevölkerung des Preussenlandes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siedlung', Die Deutsche Ostseidlung des Mittelalters als Problem der Europäischen Geschichte Reichenau-Vorträge, ed. W. Schlesinger (Sigmaringen 1975), 3, p. 433.
  96. ASP 2, no. 30, p. 33f.
  97. Ibid., 18, p. 35.
  98. Ibid., 22, p. 42.
  99. ASP 2, no. 31, 5, p. 44.
  100. ASP 2, no. 31, 14, p. 45.
  101. ASP 2, no. 41, p. 62.
  102. ASP 2, no. 43, pp. 63-64.
  103. ASP 2, no. 44, pp. 64-65.
  104. Blumhoff, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte', p. 21; Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht, p. 137f.; Werminghoff, 'Der Deutsche Orden und die Stände', p. 54f.; E. Weise, 'Entwicklungsstufen der Verfassungsgeschichte des Ordensstaates Preussen im 15. Jahrhundert', Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (1958) 7, p. 9.
  105. ASP 2, no. 102, pp. 162-163.

106. ASP 2, no. 102, pp. 162-163.
107. Ibid., p. 164.
108. ASP 2, no. 108, p. 170f.
109. ASP 2, no. 108, pp. 170-171.
110. Ibid., p. 172.
111. Blumhoff, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte', p. 29.
112. Ibid., p. 31.
113. ASP 2, no. 30, p. 43.
114. Ibid., 8, p. 44.
115. ASP 2, no. 108, p. 174; E. Lüdicke, 'Der Rechtskampf des deutschen Ordens gegen den Bund der preussischen Stände 1440-1453', Altpreussische Forschungen (1935), 12, p. 6.
116. ASP 2, no. 108, p. 174.
117. ASP 4, no. 23, pp. 36-37.
118. ASP 4, no. 23, p. 38f. See also ASP 4, no. 17, p. 25f.
119. ASP 2, no. 133, pp. 184-185.
120. ASP 2, no. 136, pp. 189-190
121. K.E. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens unter dem Hochmeister Konrad von Erlichshausen 1441-1449 Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft ed. Heimpel, Hubatsch, Kaehler and Schramm (Göttingen 1953), 10/11, p. 96f.
122. Ibid., p. 97; ASP 2, no. 399, pp. 644-645; for a further example of bad blood between the Old and New Towns see ASP 3, no. 306, pp. 579-80 - the Schulz of the New Town was subjected to ribald singing and snowballs by two men from the Old Town (und worffen mit sne noch em).
123. ASP 2, no. 432, p. 693.
124. W. Brüning, 'Die Stellung des Bistums Ermland zum deutschen Orden im dreizehnjährigen Städtekrieg' Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1892) 29, p. 7f.
125. Ibid., p. 8; ASP 2, no. 107, pp. 168-169.



126. Brüning, 'Die Stellung des Bistums Ermland', p. 9; ASP 2, nos. 424, p. 683; 425, pp. 683-684; 426, p. 684; 427, pp. 684-685; 428, p. 686; 429, p. 686.
127. Gorski, 'La Ligue des Etats', p. 183.
128. ASP 2, no. 432, p. 694.
129. ASP 2, no. 438, pp. 702-704.
130. ASP 2, no. 440, pp. 710-711.
131. ASP 2, no. 446, pp. 717-718.
132. ASP 2, no. 456, p. 727.
133. ASP 2, no. 443, pp. 716-717.
134. ASP 2, no. 453, p. 725; see also nos. 454, pp. 725-726 and 459, p. 728.
135. ASP 2, no. 467, p. 733.
136. ASP 2, no. 450, p. 723.
137. ASP 2, no. 467, p. 735.
138. ASP 2, nos. 467, pp. 734-735; 468, pp. 738-739; 473, p. 747.
139. ASP 3, no. 5, p. 7.
140. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, p. 115f.
141. ASP 3, no. 6, pp. 10-11.
142. Ibid., p. 10.
143. ASP 3, no. 8, p. 13.
144. ASP 3, p. 106; Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, p. 116.
145. T. Hirsch, Danzigs Handels- und Gewerbsgeschichte unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens (Leipzig 1858), pp. 60-61; Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, p. 116.
146. ASP 3, no. 31, pp. 62-63.
147. ASP 3, no. 39, pp. 72-73.
148. ASP 3, no. 40, p. 73.
149. ASP 3, no. 44, p. 82.

150. ASP 3, no. 44, pp. 83-84.
151. ASP 3, no. 48, p. 87.
152. ASP 3, no. 50, p. 88.
153. ASP 3, no. 43, pp. 79-80.
154. ASP 3, no. 44, pp. 81-82.
155. ASP 3, no. 50, p. 88.
156. ASP 3, no. 51, pp. 89-90.
157. GSA OF 16 fol. 376; this order to cease harrassing or threatening members of the Union was reported to the Estates at the Diet in Elbing of January 1441, see ASP 2, no. 190, p. 298.
158. SRP 4, p. 426.
159. Weise, Das Widerstandsrecht, p. 158f; Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, pp. 377-378; Grieser, Hans von Baysen, p. 47; for short biographies of Ludwig von Erlichshausen and Heinrich Reuss von Plauen see Altpreussische Biographie, 1, p. 168 and 2, p. 506.
160. Murawski, Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn, pp. 82-83.
161. ASP 3, no. 63, p. 121.
162. ASP 3, no. 64, p. 125.
163. ASP 3, no. 66, p. 130.
164. Ibid., p. 132.
165. ASP 3, no. 68, 5b, p. 138.
166. Ibid., 26, p. 140; 58, p. 143; 32, p. 140.
167. Ibid., 33, p. 141.
168. Ibid., p. 149.
169. For a good characterisation of these learned counsellors see H. Boockmann, 'Zur Mentalität spätmittelalterlicher gelehrter Räte', Historische Zeitschrift (1981) 233, especially p. 310.
170. ASP 3, no. 69, p. 158.
171. Ibid., p. 160.
172. Ibid., p. 164.

173. Ibid., pp. 167-177.
174. ASP 3, no. 50, p. 88.
175. Lüdicke, 'Der Rechtskampf', especially pp. 24-26.
176. Ibid., pp. 30-31.
177. Ibid., p. 32.
178. Ibid., pp. 32-35.
179. ASP 3, no. 85, p. 213, 22.
180. Ibid., p. 223.
181. ASP 3, no. 91, pp. 241-243.
182. Ibid., pp. 243-244.
183. ASP 3, no. 92, p. 256.
184. ASP 3, no. 91, pp. 248-249.
185. Ibid., p. 251.
186. Ibid., p. 254.
187. Lüdicke, 'Der Rechtskampf', p. 180.
188. ASP 3, no. 198, p. 431.
189. ASP 3, no. 199, p. 436.
190. ASP 3, no. 226, p. 473.
191. Lüdicke, 'Der Rechtskampf', p. 203; the emissaries were paid by the towns. See ASP 3, no. 316, pp. 586-587 for payments made by Danzig in February 1453.
192. ASP 3, no. 371, pp. 623-624.
193. ASP 3, no. 275, p. 528.
194. Lüdicke, 'Der Rechtskampf', pp. 213-214.
195. ASP 3, no. 432, p. 688.
196. ASP 3, no. 434, pp. 689-690.
197. ASP 3, no. 439, p. 696.
198. ASP 4, no. 86, p. 186.
199. ASP 4, no. 29, p. 48.

200. ASP 4, no. 30, p. 48.
201. ASP 4, no. 145, pp. 270-271.
202. ASP 4, no. 41, p. 61.
203. ASP 4, no. 44, p. 62.
204. ASP 4, no. 42, p. 61.
205. ASP 4, no. 68, p. 95.
206. ASP 4, no. 75, p. 102.
207. ASP 4, no. 91, p. 212.
208. ASP 4, no. 72, pp. 99-100.
209. ASP 4, no. 73, p. 101; see also H. Boockmann, 'Zu den Politischen Zielen des Deutschen Ordens in seiner Auseinandersetzung mit den Preussischen Ständen', Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands (1966) 15, p. 63 and p. 101: 1 and 2 for the suggestion, made by an anonymous officer of the Order in the fifteenth century that the Order's opponents names should be listed as a prelude to driving them out of Prussia following the condemnation of the Union by the Emperor.
210. ASP 4, no. 152, p. 278.
211. ASP 4, no. 82, p. 107.
212. ASP 4, no. 45, pp. 62-63.
213. ASP 4, no. 131, p. 255.
214. ASP 4, no. 154, pp. 280-281.
215. SRP 3, p. 662, note 1.
216. Ibid., p. 662.
217. C. Krollmann, Politische Geschichte, p. 145.
218. SRP 3, p. 663, note 1.
219. ASP 4, no. 244, p. 366.
220. Krollman, Politische Geschichte, p. 146.
221. P. Simson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig (Danzig 1918) 3, no. 137, pp. 106-108.
222. Ibid., no. 138, pp. 109-110.

223. On the course of the war see Krollmann, Politische Geschichte, p. 145f. or more recently M. Biskup, Trzynastoletnia wojna z Krzyzackim 1454-1466 (Warsaw 1967), which includes German and Russian summaries between pp. 761-778.
224. Krollman, Politische Geschichte, pp. 159-160.
225. On these 'prototypes' of the SS see W. Wippermann, Der Ordens staat als Ideologie Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin 24 (Berlin 1979), Publikationen zur Geschichte der Deutsch-Polnischen Beziehungen 2, p. 260.
226. For an example of this genre see Perry Anderson, Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism (London 1978) p. 255.
227. Hintze, 'Typologie der Ständischen Verfassungen', pp. 231-232.
228. ASP 2, no. 190, p. 298; E. Wilke, 'Die Ursachen', p. 47.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(1) Archival Manuals and Bibliographies

FORSTREUTER, K., Das Preussische Staatsarchiv in Königsberg. Ein geschichtlicher Rückblick mit einer Übersicht über seine Bestände Veröffentlichungen des Niedersächsischen Archivverwaltung 3 (Göttingen 1955).

HAAF, R. ten, Kurze Bibliographie zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 1198-1561 (Kitzingen 1949).

JOACHIM, E. and HUBATSCH, W. and others, Regesta Historico-Diplomatica Ordinis Sanctae Mariae Theutonicorum 1198-1525 Pars 1. Vol. 1: Regesten zum Ordensbriefarchiv 1198-1454 (Göttingen 1948), vol. 2; Regesten zum Ordensbriefarchiv 1455-1510 (Göttingen 1950); Pars 2: Regesta Privilegiorum Ordinis Sanctae Mariae Theutonicorum. Regesten der Pergamenturkunden aus der Zeit des Deutschen Ordens (Göttingen 1948).

LAMPE, K.H., Bibliographie des Deutschen Ordens bis 1959 Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 3, ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1975).

WERMKE, E., Bibliographie der Geschichte von Ost- und Westpreussen bis 1929 (Aalen 1962 reprint of 1933 Königsberg edition); 1930-38 (Aalen 1964); 1939-70 (Bad Godesberg 1974).

(2) Unpublished sources

The unpublished sources for the history of the Order in Prussia are contained in the Königsberg collection now housed in the Geheimes Staatsarchiv, West Berlin. The two principal collections of sources used in this thesis were the Ordensbriefarchiv (OBA) and the Ordensfolianten (OF). The former must be one of the most extraordinarily rich collections of sources on medieval Europe. It consists of over 30,000 letters, charters, inventories, rent-rolls, accounts and visitation reports. Most of the letters are on single sheets of paper which were usually folded and which often bear the remnants of a seal and both the Order's 'postal

codes' and chancellery classifications on the reverse. The rent-rolls and inventories often consist of several loose sheets of paper folded so as to form a booklet. The orthography of the letters varies according to the territorial origins of the scribes. The frequency of the letters increased sharply in the first half of the fifteenth century. While there are 1,239 items from 1198-1409, there are approximately 11,000 from 1410-1453. Of the latter, about 2,000 have been used in the research for this thesis running from numbers 100 to 13839, in the Regesta of Joachim and Hubatsch. Individual reference to them is, of course, made in the notes.

The Ordensfolianten consist of books of charters (Handfesten-buchern); account books; rent rolls (Zinsverzeichnisse); registers of the correspondence of Grand Masters von Rusdorf and von Erlichshausen and finally, a fifteenth century copy of the Rule, Laws and Customs of the Order. The latter (OF 60), is a solid and strikingly beautiful leather-bound folio measuring 36.5 cm x 26.2 cm. The capitals in the text are illuminated and the folio still has its original metal clasps and leather straps. Unfortunately, some important sources were destroyed in the Second World War and in the course of the evacuation of the Order's archives from Königsberg. These missing sources include the registers of Grand Masters von Plauen and Kuchmeister and the Order's records of the damage caused by the Poles between 1410 and 1419. Despite these gaps, made worse by the woeful inadequacy of sources relating to the Order's judicial activity, the Königsberg collection can be made to yield a vast quantity of detail concerning daily life in the Order in the fifteenth century. In addition to OF 60, the following Ordensfolianten have been consulted for this thesis:

13, 15, 16, 17, 67, 91a and b, 93, 97, 99,  
100, 127, 129, 131, 132, 161, 166m, 166n,  
179, 179a, 184a, 200b i and ii.

### (3) Published sources

AKTEN der Ständetage Preussens unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens, ed. M. Töppen, Vols. 1-5 (1233-1525), (Leipzig 1874-1886).

AKTEN der Ständetage Preussens, Königlichen Anteils (Westpreussen), ed. F. Thunert, I (1466-1479), (Danzig 1896).

Das AUSGABEBUCH des Marienburger Hauskomturs für die

- Jahre 1410 bis 1420, ed. W. Zieseemer (Königsberg 1911).
- Das GROSSE ÄMTERBUCH des Deutschen Ordens, ed. W. Zieseemer (Wiesbaden 1968 reprint of Danzig 1921 edition).
- Das GROSSE ZINSBUCH des Deutschen Ritterordens, ed. P.G. Thielen (Marburg 1958).
- Das MARIENBURGER ÄMTERBUCH, ed. W. Zieseemer (Danzig 1916).
- Das MARIENBURGER KONVENTSBUCH der Jahre 1399-1412, ed. W. Zieseemer (Danzig 1913).
- 'Die Reste des MARIENBURGER KONVENTSBUCHES aus den Jahren 1395-1398', ed. A. Sielmann, Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1920), 60, pp. 67-73.
- Das MARIENBURGER TRESSLERBUCH der Jahre 1399-1409, ed. E. Joachim (Königsberg 1896).
- Das ZINSBUCH des Hauses Marienburg, ed. W. Zieseemer  
Beilage zum Programm des Königlichen Gymnasiums zu Marienburg (Marienburg 1910).
- Das PFENNIGSCHULDBUCH der KOMTUREI CHRISTBURG, ed. H. Wunder, Veröffentlichungen aus den Archiven Preussischer Kulturbesitz vol. 2, ed. G. Zimmermann and H. Koeppen (Köln/Berlin 1969).
- Die KULMER HANDFESTE, Text, rechtshistorische und textkritische Untersuchungen nebst Studien zur Kulmer Handfeste, ed. G. Kisch, Forschungen und Quellen zur Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte des Deutschordenslandes (Vol. 2) (Sigmaringen 1978<sup>2</sup>).
- Die BERICHTE der GENERALPROKURATOREN des Deutschen Ordens an der Kurie, Vol. 1, ed. K. Forstreuter, Veröffentlichungen der Niedersächsischen Archivverwaltung 12 (Göttingen 1961); Vol. 2 ed. H. Koeppen (Göttingen 1960); Vol. 3,1 ed. H. Koeppen (Göttingen 1966); Vol. 3,2 ed. H. Koeppen (Göttingen 1971); Vol. 4,1 ed. K. Forstreuter and H. Koeppen (Göttingen 1973).
- Die STAATSVETRÄGE des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen im 15. Jahrhundert 1, (1398-1437), ed. E. Weise (Marburg 1970<sup>2</sup>); 2, (1438-1467) (Marburg 1955).
- Die STATUTEN des Deutschen Ordens nach den ältesten Handschriften, ed. M. Perlbach (Halle 1890).



'Der WIRTSCHAFTSPLAN des Ordenshauses Elbing aus dem Jahre 1386', ed. A. Semrau, Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn (1937) 45, pp. 1-74.

'Gesetze des Hochmeisters Paul von Rusdorf und Vorschriften der Visitation', Preussisches Archiv oder Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Kunde der Vorzeit, ed. K. Faber, Erste Sammlung 2, (Königsberg 1809), pp. 235-249.

JURA PRUTENORUM, ed. and translated by J. Matuszewski, Towarzystwo Naukowe w Torunia Fontes 53 (Torun 1963), pp. 25-76.

PREUSSISCHES URKUNDENBUCH, Vol. 1, ed. R. Philippi, C.P. Wolky, A. Seraphim (Königsberg 1882-1909); Vol. 2, ed. M. Hein and E. Maschke (Königsberg 1932-1939); Vol. 3, ed. M. Hein, H. Koeppen, A. Triller (Königsberg and Marburg 1944-1961); Vol. 4, ed. H. Koeppen and B. Poschmann (Marburg 1960-1964); Vol. 5, ed. K. Conrad (Marburg 1969-1975).

REVISIO BONORUM OECONOMIAE MARIAEBURGENSIS, ed. W. Hejnosz, Zróżdła do dziejów ekonomii Malborskiej (Łódź 1958) 1, pp. ix-75.

SCRIPTORES RERUM PRUSSICARUM. Die Geschichtsquellen der preussischen Vorzeit bis zum Untergange der Ordensherrschaft, ed. T. Hirsch, E. Strehlke, M. Töppen, Vols. 1-5 (Leipzig 1861-1874). Cited as SRP

'VISITATIONSBERICHTE aus dem Culmerland', ed. W. Zieseemer Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1917), 53, pp. 486-493.

#### (4) Literature

ABEL, W., Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft vom frühen Mittelalter bis zum 19. Jahrhundert Deutsche Agrargeschichte, ed. G. Franz (Stuttgart 1967<sup>2</sup>), volume 2.

Agricultural Fluctuations in Europe from the thirteenth to the twentieth centuries, translated by O. Ordish (London 1980).

ANDERSON, P., Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism (London 1978).

- ANON., 'Geschäftlicher Briefverkehr des Deutschen Ordens', Archiv für Post und Telegraphie (1897) 25, pp. 648-649.
- ARBUSOW, L., Grundriss der Geschichte Liv-, Est und Kurlands (Riga 1908)<sup>5</sup>
- ARNOLD, U., 'Geschichtsschreibung im Preussenland bis zum Ausgang des 16. Jahrhunderts', Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands (1968) 17, pp. 74-126.
- 'Karl IV und der Deutsche Orden', Kaiser Karl IV Staatsmann und Mäzen, ed. F. Seibt (München 1978), pp. 167-173.
- AUBIN, H., 'The Lands East of the Elbe and German colonisation eastwards', Cambridge Economic History of Europe 1, The Agrarian Life of the Middle Ages, ed. M.M. Postan (Cambridge 1971<sup>2</sup>), pp. 449-487.
- BACZKO, L. von, Geschichte Preussens 6 vols. (Königsberg 1792-1800).
- BENNINGHOVEN, F., 'Die Kriegsdienste der Komturei Danzig um die Jahr 1400', Acht Jahrhunderte Deutscher Orden in Einzeldarstellungen Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1967) 1, pp. 191-222.
- BERTLING, A., 'Erläuterungen und Ergebnisse der Kopenhagener Wachstafeln', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1881) 4, pp. 34-82.
- 'Die Wachstafeln der Danziger Stadtbibliothek' Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1884) 11, pp. 1-61.
- BERTRAM, H., 'Die Eindeichung, Trockenlegung und Besiedlung des Weichseldeltas seit dem Jahre 1300 in ihrer geopolitischen Bedeutung', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1935) 72, pp. 187-202.
- BISKUP, M., 'Die Polnisch-Preussischen Handelsbeziehungen in der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts', Hansische Studien Gesammelte Beiträge Heinrich Sproemberg zum 70. Geburtstag, ed. G. Heitz and M. Unger (Berlin 1961), pp. 1-6.
- Trzynastoletnia wojna z Zakonem Krzyzackim 1454-1466 (Warsaw 1967).
- 'Der Zusammenbruch des Ordensstaates in Preussen im Lichte der Neuesten Polnischen Forschungen', Acta Poloniae Historica (1963), 9, pp. 59-76

'Polish Research Work on the History of the Teutonic Order State Organisation in Prussia 1945-1959' Acta Poloniae Historica (1964), 8, pp. 89-113.

BLANKE, F., 'Die Missionsmethode des Bischofs Christian von Preussen' reprinted in Heidenmission und Kreuzzugsgedanke in der Deutschen Ostpolitik des Mittelalters, ed. H. Beumann, Wege der Forschung 7 (Darmstadt 1973), pp. 337-364.

'Die Entscheidungsjahre der Preussenmission (1206-1274)' reprinted in Heidenmission und Kreuzzugsgedanke in der Deutschen Ostpolitik des Mittelalters ed. H. Beumann Wege der Forschung 7 (Darmstadt 1973), pp. 389-417.

BLOCKMANS, W.P., 'A typology of representative institutions in late medieval Europe', Journal of Medieval History (1978) 4, pp. 189-215.

BLUM, J., 'The Rise of Serfdom in Eastern Europe', American Historical Review (1957) 62, pp. 807-836.

BLUMHOFF, E., 'Beiträge zur Geschichte und Entwicklung der Westpreussischen Stände im 15. Jahrhundert' Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins (1894) 34, pp. 1-80.

BÖHNKE, W., 'Der Binnenhandel des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen und seine beziehung zum Aussenhandel um 1400', Hansische Geschichtsblätter (1962) 80-81, pp. 26-95.

BOOCKMANN, H., 'Zu den Politischen Zielen des Deutschen Ordens in seiner Auseinandersetzung mit den Preussischen Ständen', Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands (1966) 15, pp. 57-104.

Laurentius Blumenau, Fürstlicher Rat-Jurist-Humanist (ca. 1415-1484), Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft, ed. H. Heimpel, R. Nurnberger, H. Roos, G. Schnath, P. Schramm, R. Wenskus, R. Wittram (Göttingen 1965) 37.

'Zur Mentalität Spätmittelalterliche Gelehrter Räte', Historische Zeitschrift (1981) 233, pp. 295-316.

BRENNER, R., 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe', Past and Present (1976) 70, pp. 30-75.

- BRUCE BOSWELL, A., 'The Teutonic Order', The Cambridge Medieval History, ed. J. Tanner, C.W. Previte-Orton, Z.N. Brooke (Cambridge 1932) 7, pp. 248-269.
- BRÜNING, W., 'Die Stellung des Bistums Ermland zum deutschen Orden im dreizehnjährigen Städtekriege' Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1895) 32, pp. 1-72.
- BUCHWALD G. von, 'Die Wachstafeln der Grossen Königlichen Bibliothek zu Kopenhagen', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1881) 4, pp. 1-33.
- CARSTEN, F.L., 'Slavs in North-Eastern Germany', Economic History Review (1941) 11, pp. 61-76.
- 'The Origins of the Junkers', English Historical Review (1947) 62, pp. 145-178.
- The Origins of Prussia (Oxford 1954).
- 'Medieval Democracy in the Brandenburg Towns and its Defeat in the Fifteenth Century', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (1943), 4th series, 25, pp. 73-91.
- CHRISTIANSEN, E., The Northern Crusades, The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier 1100-1525. New Studies in Medieval History, ed. D. Bethell (London 1980).
- DOLLINGER, P., The German Hansa, translated and edited by D.S. Ault and S.H. Steinberg (London 1970).
- DORMANN, E.J., Geschichte des Kreises Marienburg nach Quellen und Urkunden (Danzig 1862).
- DU BOULAY, F.R.H., 'Henry of Derby's Expedition to Prussia 1390-1 and 1392', The Reign of Richard II Essays in Honour of May McKisack, ed. F.R.H. Du Boulay and C.M. Barron (London 1971) pp. 153-173.
- EKDAHL, S., 'Der Krieg zwischen dem Deutschen Orden und Polen-Litauen im Jahre 1422', Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (1964) 13, pp. 614-651.
- ENGELS, O., 'Zur Historiographie des Deutschen Ordens im Mittelalter', Archiv für Kulturgeschichte (1966) 48, pp. 336-363.
- FOCKEMA ANDREAE, S.J., 'Embanking and Drainage Authorities in the Netherlands during the Middle Ages' Speculum (1952) 27, pp. 158-167.

FORSTREUTER, K., 'Das Hauptstadtproblem des Deutschen Ordens', Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands (1956) 5, pp. 129-156.

Preussen und Russland von den Anfängen des Deutschen Ordens bis zum Peter dem Grossen  
Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft  
ed. H. Heimpel, W. Hubatsch, R. Kaehler, P. Schramm (Göttingen 1955), 23.

'Latein und Deutsch im Deutschen Orden. Zur Frage einer Amtssprache', Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes. Festschrift für E. Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg 1963), pp. 373-391.

FRITZE, K., Bürger und Bauer zur Hansezeit Studien zu den Stadt-Land-Beziehungen an der sudwestlichen Ostseeküste vom 13. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert.  
Abhandlungen zur Handels- und Sozialgeschichte, ed. Hansischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Historiker Gesellschaft der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vol. 16 (Weimar 1976).

GAUSE, F., 'Organisation und Kompetenz der Landgerichte des Ordenslandes Preussen', Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1922) 59, pp. 115-156, 209-246.

'Geschichte der Landgerichte des Ordenslandes Preussen', Altpreussische Forschungen (1926) 3, pp. 5-69.

GOLLUB, H., 'Die Schadenbücher des Deutschen Ordens', Altpreussische Forschungen (1924) 2, pp. 143-144.

GORSKI, K., 'La Structure economique et sociale de l'etat de l'Ordre teutonique en Prusse xiv-xv siecle' Annali di storia economica e sociale (1968) 7, pp. 278-292.

'L'Ordre Teutonique Un nouveau point de vue' Revue Historique (1963) 230, pp. 285-294.

'The Royal Prussian Estates in the second half of the Fifteenth Century and their Relation to the Crown of Poland', Acta Poloniae Historica (1960) 4, pp. 49-64.

'The Teutonic Order in Prussia', Medievalia et Humanistica (1966) 17, pp. 20-37.

'La Ligue des États et les Origines du Régime représentatif en Prusse', Studies presented to the International Commission for the History of Representation and Parliamentary Institutions, 23, Album Helen Maud Cam (Louvain/Paris 1960) 1, pp. 174-186.

'Les Débuts de la Représentation de la Communitas Nobilium dans les Assemblées d'États de l'Est Européen', Standen en Landen (Brussels 1968) 47, pp. 37-55.

'Die Anfänge des Ständewesens im Nord- und Ostmittel-europa im Mittelalter', Standen en Landen (1966) 40, pp. 43-59.

GRASKE, K., 'Der Hochmeister Heinrich von Plauen im Konflikt mit den Städten des Ordenslandes Preussen', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1896) 35, pp. 1-17.

'Die Verschwörung Georgs von Wirsberg des Komturs von Rehden und der Eidechsenritter', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1894) 34, pp. 91-104.

GRIESER, R., Hans von Baysen, Ein Staatsmann aus der Zeit des Niederganges der Ordensherrschaft in Preussen Deutschland und der Osten Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen ed. H. Aubin, A. Brackmann; M. Hein, J. Papritz, E. Randt, W. Recke, H. Ueberberger 4 (Leipzig 1936).

HAUKE, K., 'Die Bedeutung der Befestigung in der Geschichte der Stadt Elbing', Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes Festschrift für E. Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg 1963), pp. 353-358.

HEIDENREICH, K., Der Deutsche Orden in der Neumark (1402-1455), Einzelschriften der Historischen Kommission für die Provinz Brandenburg und die Reichshauptstadt Berlin 5, (Berlin 1932).

HELLMANN, M., 'Bemerkungen zur sozialgeschichtlichen Erforschung des Deutschen Ordens', Historische Jahrbuch (1961) 80, pp. 126-142.

HEYM, W., 'Ein Bauerhaus aus dem Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts im Deutschen Ordensland', Mannus (1934) 26, pp. 354-359.

HINTZE, O., 'Typologie der Ständischen Verfassungen des Abendlandes', Historische Zeitschrift (1930), 141, pp. 229-248.

HIRSCH, T., 'Geschichte des Karthauser Kreises bis zum Aufhören der Ordensherrschaft', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1882) 6, pp. 1-148.

Handels- und Gewerbsgeschichte Danzigs unter

- der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens (Leipzig 1858)
- HOFFMANN, H-H., Der Staat des Deutschmeisters, Studien zu einer Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation, Studien zur Bayerischen Verfassungs- und Sozialgeschichte 3, (München 1964).
- KASISKE, K., Die Siedlungstätigkeit des Deutschen Ordens im östlichen Preussen bis zum Jahre 1410 Einzelschriften der Historischen Kommission für ost- und westpreussische Landesforschung 5, (Königsberg 1934).
- 'Mittelalterliche Raumordnung in Westpreussen' Weichselland (1940) 39, pp. 54-59.
- KEYSER, E., Die Bevölkerung Danzigs im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert und ihre Herkunft Pfingstblätter des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins 15 (Lübeck 1928<sup>2</sup>)
- Danzigs Geschichte (Danzig 1928)<sup>2</sup>
- KISCH, G., Das Fischereirecht im Deutschordensgebiet, Beiträge zu seiner Geschichte, Forschungen und Quellen zur Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte des Deutschordenslandes 3 (Sigmaringen 1978).
- KLEIN, A., Die zentrale Finanzverwaltung im Deutschordensstaate Preussen am Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts. Nach dem Marienburger Tresslerbuch Staats- und sozialwissenschaftliche Forschungen 23, 3 (Leipzig 1904).
- KNOLL, P.W., The Rise of the Polish Monarchy, Piast Poland in East Central Europe 1320-1370 (Chicago 1972).
- KOEPPEL, H., 'Der Fall des Gebietigers Johann Nothafft', Acht Jahrhunderts Deutscher Orden Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 1, ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1967), pp. 153-164.
- 'Eine Beschwerdeschrift der Altstadt Thorn gegen Ihren Komtur Johann Nothafft aus dem Jahre 1350', Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg/Pr. (1960), 10, pp. 32-51.
- KROLLMANN, C., 'Zur Besiedlungs Geschichte und Nationalitätenmischung in den Komtureien Christburg, Osterode und Elbing', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1923) 64, pp. 3-41.

'Das Religionswesen der alten Preussen',  
Altpreussische Forschungen (1927) 4, pp.  
5-19.

Die Bau und Kunstdenkmäler des Ordenslandes  
Preussen in den Schadenbüchern (1411/1419)  
Veröffentlichung der Stadtbibliothek Königs-  
berg (Berlin 1919), pp. 3-52.

'Die Herkunft der Deutschen Ansiedler in  
Preussen', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen  
Geschichts-Vereins (1912) 54, pp. 1-103.

Politische Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens in  
Preussen (Königsberg 1932).

'Die Politik des Hochmeisters Heinrich von  
Plauen gegen die grossen Städte', Oberländische  
Geschichtsblätter (1910) 3, pp. 81-93.

'Die Besiedlung Ostpreussens durch den Deutschen  
Orden', Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und  
Wirtschaftsgeschichte (1928) 21, pp. 280-298.

'Der Deutsche Orden in Preussen', Deutsche  
Staatenbildung und deutsche Kultur im  
Preussenlande, ed. Landeshauptmann der Provinz  
Ostpreussen (Königsberg 1931), pp. 54-87.

KUHN, W., 'Der Pflug als Betriebseinheit in Altpreussen',  
Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (1963) 12, pp.  
473-500.

'Die Siedlerzahlen der deutschen Ostsiedlung',  
Studium sociale (Köln/Opladen 1963), pp. 131-  
154.

'Der Haken in Altpreussen', Studien zur  
Geschichte des Preussenlandes Festschrift für  
E. Keyser zu seinem 70. Geburtstag, ed. E.  
Bahr (Marburg 1963), pp. 164-194.

'Bauernhofgrössen in der mittelalterlichen  
Nordostsiedlung', Hamburger mittel- und ost-  
deutsche Forschungen (1963) 4, pp. 210-267.

'Ritterorden als Grenzhüter des Abendlandes  
gegen das östliche Heidentum', Ostdeutsche  
Wissenschaft (1959) 6, pp. 7-70.

KULA, W., An Economic Theory of the Feudal System Towards  
A Model of the Polish Economy 1500-1800, trans.  
L. Garner (London 1976).



- KUTOWSKI, E., 'Zur Geschichte der Söldner in den Heeren des Deutschordensstaates in Preussen bis zum ersten Thorner Frieden (1 Februar 1411)' Oberländische Geschichtsblätter (1912) 3, pp. 407-522.
- LAMPE, E., 'Beiträge zur Geschichte Heinrichs von Plauen 1411-1413', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1889) 26, pp. 1-47.
- LEINZ, J., 'Die Ursachen des Abfalls Danzig vom Deutscher Orden', Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands (1965) 13/14, pp. 1-59.
- LÜCKERATH, C.A., Paul von Rusdorf Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1422-1441 Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 15, ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1969).
- LÜDICKE, E., 'Der Rechtskampf des Deutschen Ordens gegen den Bund der preussischen Stände 1440-1453' Altpreussische Forschungen (1935) 12, pp. 1-43, 173-217.
- MAGER, F., Der Wald in Altpreussen als Wirtschaftsraum Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart ed. Johann Gottfried Herder Forschungsrat 7 (Köln/Graz 1960) 2 volumes.
- MALOWIST, M., Croissance et regression en Europe xiv<sup>e</sup>-xvii<sup>e</sup> siècles (Paris 1972).
- MASCHKE, E., Der Deutsche Ordensstaat Gestalten seiner grossen Meister (Hamburg 1936<sup>2</sup>)
- Der Deutsche Orden und die Preussen. Bekehrung und Unterwerfung in der preussisch-baltischen Mission des 13. Jahrhunderts. Historische Studien 176, (Berlin 1928).
- 'Burgund und der preussische Ordensstaat', Syntagma Friburgense Festschrift für H. Aubin (Lindau/Konstanz 1956), pp. 147-172.
- 'Die Inneren Wandlungen des Deutschen Ritterordens' Geschichte und Gegenwartsbewusstsein Festschrift für Hans Rothfels zum 70. Geburtstag, ed. W. Besson, F. Frhr. Hiller von Gaetringen (Göttingen 1963), pp. 249-277.
- MEYER, S., 'Paul von Rusdorf und die Konvente von Königsberg, Balga und Brandenburg', Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1909) 46, pp. 363-417, 543-591.

- MILTHALER, F., Die Grossgebietiger des Deutschen Ritterordens bis 1440. Ihre Stellung und Befugnisse. Schriften der Albertus-Universität, ed. Ostpreussischen Hochschulkreis. Geisteswissenschaftliche Reihe 26 (Königsberg 1940).
- MORTENSEN, H., 'Landesplanung im Ordenzeitlichen und herzoglichen Ostpreussen', Neues Archiv für Landes- und Volkskunde von Niedersachsen (1948) 7/8, pp. 439-459.
- MORTENSEN, H., and G., Die Besiedlung des nordöstlichen Ostpreussens bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts Teil 1. Die Preussisch-deutsche Siedlung am Westrand der Grossen Wildnis um 1400 Deutschland und der Osten. Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte ihrer Beziehungen vol. 7 (Leipzig 1937).
- MULVERSTEDT, G.A. von 'Die Beamten und Konventsmitglieder in den Verwaltungbezirken des Deutschen Ordens innerhalb des Oberländischen Kreises', Oberländische Geschichtsblätter (1900) 2, pp. 1-59.
- MURAWSKI, K.E., Zwischen Tannenberg und Thorn. Die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens unter dem Hochmeister Konrad von Erlichshausen 1441-1449 Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft, ed. Heimpel, Hubatsch, Kaehler, Schramm 10/11 (Göttingen 1953).
- NAUDE, W., 'Die Getreidehandelspolitik des Deutschen Deutschen Ordens', Die Getreidehandelspolitik der europäischen Staaten vom 13. bis zum 18. Jh. als Einleitung in die preussischen Getreidehandelspolitik. Acta Borussica (Berlin 1896), Abt. 2, R.2, vol. 1, pp. 252-278.
- NÖBEL, W., Michael Kuchmeister Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1414-1422 Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens, ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1969), 5.
- OELSCHNITZ, A.B.E., v.d., Herkunft und Wappen der Hochmeister des Deutschen Ordens 1198-1525. Einzelschriften des Historischen Kommission für ost- und westpreussischen Landesforschungen 1, (Königsberg 1926).
- OSTWALD, P., 'Das Handwerk unter dem Deutschen Orden' Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins (1913) 55, pp. 149-166.

- PARAVICINI, W., 'Die Preussenreise des europäischen Adels', Historische Zeitschrift (1981) 232, pp. 25-38.
- PATZE, H., 'Der Frieden von Christburg vom Jahre 1249 reprinted in Heidenmission und Kreuzzugs gedanke in der Deutschen Ostpolitik des mittelalters Wege der Forschung 7, ed. H. Beumann (Darmstadt 1973), pp. 417-485.
- 'Die deutsche bäuerliche Gemeinde im Ordensstaat Preussen', Die Anfänge der Landgemeinde und ihr Wesen Vorträge und Forschungen 8 (Konstanz/Stuttgart 1964), pp. 149-200.
- PLEHN, H., 'Zur Geschichte der Agrarverfassung von Ost- und Westpreussen' Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte (1904) 17, pp. 383-466, (1905), 18, pp. 61-122.
- RAUTENBERG, W., 'Der Verkauf der Marienburg 1454-1457 mit Beiträgen zum zeitgenössischen Pfand- und Herrschaftsrecht sowie zur Treuepflicht im Landrecht' Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes Festschrift für E. Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg 1963), pp. 119-150.
- REIMER, H., 'Der Verfall der Deutschordensballei Koblenz im 15. Jahrhundert', Trierisches Archiv (1907) 11, pp. 1-42.
- RENKEN, F., Der Handel der Königsberger Grossschäfferei des Deutschen Ordens mit Flandern um 1400 Abhandlungen zur Handels- und Seegeschichte im Auftrage des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins ed. F. Rörig and W. Vogel, 5 (Weimar 1937).
- RIEL, K., 'Die Siedlungstätigkeit des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen in der Zeit von 1410-1466', Altpreussische Forschungen (1937) 14, pp. 224-267.
- RILEY-SMITH, J., The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus c. 1050-1310 (London 1967).
- ROUSSELLE, M., 'Die Besiedlung des Kreises Preussisch-Eylau in der Ordenszeit', Altpreussische Forschungen (1926) 3, pp. 5-44.
- 'Das Siedlungswerk des Deutschen Ordens im Lande Gerdauen', Altpreussische Forschungen (1929) 6, pp. 220-255.

- SATTLER, C., 'Der Staat des Deutschen Ordens zur Zeit seiner Blüte', Historische Zeitschrift (1883) 49, pp. 229-260.
- 'Die Hanse und der Deutsche Orden in Preussen bis zu dessen Verfall', Hansische Geschichtsblätter (1882) 4, pp. 67-84.
- 'Der Handel des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen zur Zeit seiner Blüte', Hansische Geschichtsblätter (1877) 3, pp. 59-85.
- SCHLÜTER, O., Wald, Sumpf und Siedlungsland in Altpreussen vor der Ordenszeit (Halle 1921).
- SCHMID, B., 'Der Ordenshof Kalthof', Mitteilungen des Westpreussischen Geschichtsvereins (1936), 35, pp. 61-67.
- 'Die Siegel des Deutschen Ordens in Preussen' Altpreussische Forschungen (1937) 14, pp. 179-186.
- SCHMIDT, G., 'Die Handhabung der Strafgewalt gegen Angehörige des Deutschen Ritterordens', Beihefte zum Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg/Pr. 4, (Kitzingen 1954) 4, pp. v-179.
- SCHREIBER, O., 'Die Personal- und Amtsdaten der Hochmeister des Deutschen Ritterordens von seiner Grundung bis zum Jahre 1525', Oberländische Geschichtsblätter (1913) 15, pp. 615-762.
- SCHUMACHER, B., 'Die Idee der Geistlichen Ritterorden im Mittelalter', reprinted in Heidenmission und Kreuzzugsgedanke in der Deutschen Ostpolitik des Mittelalters Wege der Forschung 7, ed. H. Beumann (Darmstadt 1973), pp. 364-385.
- SEMRAU, A., 'Die Huldigung unter dem Hochmeister Konrad Zöllner in den Jahren 1383 bis 1384', Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn (1935) 43, pp. 142-143.
- 'Das Ordenshaus Thorn', Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn (1939) 47, pp. 53-85.
- 'Die Herkunft der Elbinger Bevölkerung von der Grundung der Stadt bis 1353', Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn (1924) 32, pp. 9-62.

- SERAPHIM, A., 'Zur Geschichte und Kritik der angeblichen Statuten des Hochmeisters Werner von Orseln' Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte (1915) 28, pp. 1-82.
- SIELMANN, A., 'Die Verwaltung des Haupthauses Marienburg in der Zeit um 1400', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1921) 61, pp. 1-101.
- SIMSON, P., Geschichte der Stadt Danzig bis 1626 vol. 1 (Danzig 1913), 2 (1918-24), 3 (1918).
- SMAIL, R.C., Crusading Warfare 1097-1193 Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought New Series, vol. 3. (Cambridge 1972).
- STEFFEN, H., 'Die soziale Lage der Deutschen Dorfbewohner im Ordensstaate Preussen', Deutsche Monatshefte Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Gegenwart des Ostdeutschtums (1941), 7/8, pp. 321-343.
- 'Die soziale Lage der Pfarrgeistlichkeit im Deutschordensstaat', Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands (1927) 69, pp. 1-97.
- 'Das ländliche Krugwesen im Deutschordensstaate', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1916) 56, pp. 217-245.
- 'Das ländliche Mühlenwesen im Deutschordensstaate', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1918) 58, pp. 73-92.
- THIELEN, P.G., Die Verwaltung des Ordensstaates Preussen vornehmlich im 15. Jahrhundert. Ostmitteleuropa in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, ed. Johann Gottfried Herder- Forschungsrat 11 (Köln/Graz 1965).
- 'Die Rolle der Uhr im geistlichen und administrativen Alltagsleben der Deutschordenskonvente in Preussen', Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes Festschrift für E. Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg 1963), pp. 392-396.
- 'Landesplanung im Ordensstaat Preussen', Forschungs- und Sitzungsberichte der Akademie für Raumforschung und Landesplanung vol. 15 (Bremen 1963), pp. 41-50.
- TÖPPEN, M., Geschichte Masurens. Ein Beitrag zur Preussischen Landes- und Kulturgeschichte 2 Neudruck der Ausgabe Danzig 1870, Aalen 1979).

Historisch-comparative Geographie von Preussen (Gotha 1858).

'Die Zins-Verfassung Preussens unter der Herrschaft des deutschen Ordens', Zeitschrift für Preussische Geschichte und Landeskunde (1867) 4, pp. 207-232, 345-367, 611-627, 742-761.

'Der Deutsche Ritterorden und die Stände Preussens', Historische Zeitschrift (1881) 46, pp. 430-449.

'Topographisch - statistische Mittheilungen über die Domänen - Vorwerke des deutschen Ordens in Preussen', Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1870) 7; pp. 412-486.

Elbinger Antiquitäten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des städtischen Lebens im Mittelalter (Marienwerder 1871) 2.

TREITSCHKE, H. von, Origins of Prussianism, trans. E. and C. Paul (London 1942).

VOIGT, J., Geschichte Preussens von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Untergang der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens, vols. 1-9 (Königsberg 1827-1829).

Geschichte des Deutschen Ritterordens in seinen zwölf Balleien vols. 1-2 (Berlin 1857-1859).

Geschichte Marienburgs, der Stadt und des Haupthauses des deutschen Ritter-Ordens in Preussen (Königsberg 1824).

Namen-Codex der Deutschen Ordens Beamten (Königsberg 1843).

VOLLBEHR, F., Die Holländer und die Deutsche Hanse Pfingstblätter des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins 21 (Lübeck 1930).

WEISE, E., Das Widerstandsrecht im Ordenslande Preussen und das mittelalterliche Europa Veröffentlichungen der Niedersächsischen Archivverwaltung 6, (Göttingen 1955).

'Der Heidenkampf des Deutschen Ordens', Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (1963) 12, pp. 420-473, 622-673, (1964), 13, pp. 401-420.

'Entwicklungsstufen der Verfassungsgeschichte des Ordensstaates Preussen im 15. Jahrhundert',

Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (1958) 7, pp. 1-17.

WENSKUS, R., 'Über die Bedeutung des Christburger Vertrages für die Rechts- und Verfassungsgeschichte des Preussenlandes', Studien zur Geschichte des Preussenlandes. Festschrift für E. Keyser, ed. E. Bahr (Marburg 1963), pp. 97-118.

'Das Ordensland Preussen als Territorialstaat des 14 Jahrhunderts', Der Deutsche Territorialstaat im 14 Jahrhundert, ed. H. Patze for the Konstanzer Arbeitskreis für mittelalterliche Geschichte (Sigmaringen 1970) 1, pp. 347-382.

'Zur Lokalisierung der Preussenkirchen des Vertrages von Christburg 1249', Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens 1 Acht Jahrhunderte Deutschen Orden in Einzeldarstellungen ed. K. Wieser (Bad Godesberg 1967), pp. 121-136.

'Die gens Candeien, zur Rolle des prussischen Adels bei der Eroberung und Verwaltung Preussens' Zeitschrift für Ostforschung (1961), 10, pp. 84-103.

'Der deutsche Orden und die nichtdeutsche Bevölkerung des Preussenlandes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Siedlung', Die Deutsche Ostsiedlung des Mittelalters als Problem der Europäischen Geschichte Reichenau-Vorträge ed. W. Schlesinger (Sigmaringen 1975) 3, pp. 417-439.

WERMBTER, H., 'Die Verfassung der Städte im Ordensland Preussen', Zeitschrift des Westpreussischen Geschichts-Vereins (1884) 13, pp. 1-74.

WERMINGHOFF, A., Der Deutsche Orden und die Stände in Preussen bis zum zweiten Thorner Frieden im Jahre 1466 Pfingstblätter des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins 8 (Munich/Leipzig 1912).

WILKE, E., 'Die Ursachen der preussischen Bauern - und Bürgerunruhen 1525 mit Studien zur ostpreussischen Agrargeschichte der Ordenszeit', Altpreussische Forschungen (1930) 7, pp. 33-81, 181-222.

WIPPERMANN, W., Der Ordensstaat als Ideologie Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin vol. 24 Publikationen zur Geschichte der Deutsch-Polnischen Beziehungen vol. 2 (Berlin 1979).

- WUNDER, H., Siedlungs und Bevölkerungsgeschichte der Komturei Christburg 13-16 Jahrhundert. Marburger Ostforschungen ed. H. Weiss (Wiesbaden 1968) 28.
- 'The Mentality of Rebellious Peasants - the Samland Peasant Rebellion of 1525', The German Peasant War of 1525 - New Viewpoints, ed. B. Scribner and G. Benecke (London 1979).
- 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development', Past and Present (1978), 78, pp. 47-55.
- ZIENTARA, B., 'Foreigners in Poland in the 10th-15th Centuries. Their Role in the Opinion of Polish Medieval Community', Acta Poloniae Historica (1974) 29, pp. 5-28.
- ZIESEMER, W., 'Siedlungsgeschichte Ost- und Westpreussens', Hansische Geschichtsblätter (1927-1928) 52, pp. 153-171.
- ZIPPEL, O., 'Die Kolonisation des Ordenslandes Preussen bis zum Jahre 1309', Altpreussische Monatsschrift (1921), 58, pp. 176-213.