

THE GERMAN CHURCH AND THE CONVERSION OF THE BALTIC SLAVS

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Several Byzantine historians¹ and an Arabian geographer² described the eastern Slavs between the sixth and the tenth centuries.³ But the first attempt of a western writer to describe the western or Baltic Slavs, i.e., those in the Elbe basin and along the south coast of the Baltic Sea, was made by Adam of Bremen in the middle of the eleventh century.⁴

¹ Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, III, chap. 14; Constantine Porphyrogenitos, *De Administrando Imperio*, chaps. 37, 38; Mauricius, *Ars Militaris*, IX, chap. 3; XI, chap. 5.

² Jacob, "Ein arabischer Berichtstatter aus dem 10. Jahrhundert," *Arabische Geographien*, II.

³ For modern literature see Bury, *History of the Eastern Roman Empire*, chaps. xi, xii; *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, II, chap. xiv; Meitzen, *Siedelung und Agrarwesen*, II, 141-64; Beazeley, *Dawn of Modern Geography*, II, 467-514; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (ed. J. B. Bury, 1900), VI, 543-44, with valuable bibliography.

⁴ *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesia pontificum*: Inestimably valuable as Adam of Bremen is, yet he is often vague and obscure, and his account of the Slavonic tribes between the Elbe and the Oder rivers, especially their geographical distribution, has given rise to extended controversy. According to Giesebrecht (*Nordlandskunde*, pp. 157-66; *Baltische Studien*, VI, 192), Adam was well informed. But the text of Adam of Bremen is notoriously corrupt and Giesebrecht accuses the scholiast of many blunders and alterations. After the great revolt of the Slavs of the lower Elbe in 983, he argues, the land between the Elbe and the Oder was shut off from Christian knowledge and commercial intercourse, so that ignorance and erroneous ideas of Slavonia naturally came to prevail among the Germans. Lappenberg (*Archiv*, VI, 864), on the other hand, finds the chief source of Adam's limitations in popular German prejudice against the Slavs and contempt for their language, which prevented any intimate knowledge of them from being acquired. Slavonic tribal names and the places occupied by them might interest a diocesan historian of Hamburg, but the Saxons were too indifferent to the promotion of Christianity among the Slavs and too contemptuous of them to be interested.

Giesebrecht has endeavored to control Adam's account by Helmold's *Chronica Slavorum*, written in the last half of the twelfth century by one who dwelt long among

The Baltic Slavs formed a separate group, distinct from the Poles and Bohemians as well as the Litu-Slav stems extending around the bight of the Baltic from the mouth of the Oder to the mouth of the Düna in modern East Prussia and Kurland. They were loosely known as Polaben or Elbslaven,¹ and were divided into four grand divisions—the Obodrites (or Abodrites), the Ljutizi (German: Welataben, or Wilzi), the Pomeranians, and the Sorben, each of these major groups in turn, except the Sorben, being subdivided into lesser stem-groups.² The Obodrites dwelt

the Slavs and knew them more intimately than any other German writer of the Middle Ages. He accepts Adam's testimony when the two agree, provided Helmold has not—as he sometimes has done, especially in the early chapters—slavishly copied his predecessor. The difficulty of clearly distinguishing the tribal names of the Slavs between the Elbe and the Oder and of accurately locating them is very great. Helmold is of better use in amplifying than in emending Adam.

However, it is to be observed that Adam's description of Slavonia falls into two parts, one dealing with the region west of the Peene River, the other with that beyond and eastward of the Peene. The former, which Adam calls Hither Slavonia (*In Sclavania citeriori*, III, 18), was comprehended within the diocese of Hamburg. He is diffuse concerning the first, but brief and obscure about things across the river. He knows a good deal of things which happen around Magdeburg, but is hazy about things *ultra Panim* (III, 21). Beyond the Oder Adam's ideas are very nebulous, as the use of words implying indirect knowledge, like *comperimus*, *dicunt*, etc., indicates (e.g., IV, 11).

Adam uses the words *Sclavi* and *Winuli* interchangeably to denominate the Slavonic peoples between the Elbe and the Oder. (The latter proper name is a variant of the earlier word *Winedi* used by Einhard. See Pertz, I, 658, where the examples are cited.) The territory he calls Sclavania, but he is loose in application of the term, sometimes using it in a broad sense, sometimes in a narrow sense (e.g., II, 13, 19; IV, 13, for the former usage; II, 40, 46, 69, for the latter usage. In II, 24, "ecclesiae in Sclavania ubique erectae sunt" and "Sclavianam in duodeviginti pagos dispertitam" undoubtedly refer to Slavonia in the strict sense of the term).

¹ From the word *po*, meaning "by," and *Labe*, meaning "Elbe" (Wendt, *Die Germanisierung der Länder östlich der Elbe*, II, 11).

² Kindred to the Obodrites were the Wagri, or Waarii of Widukind (*Adam of Bremen*, III, 68), in East Holstein, the Lingones on the Elbe (*Adam of Bremen*, III, 19), the Warnabi on the Warnow (*Adam of Bremen*, III, 19; Helmold, I, 87), and the Dravani west of the Elbe in the Hanoverian Wendland around Lüchow, Gartow, and Wustrow (Wendt, I, 11; Brückner, *Die slavischen Ansiedelungen in der Altmark*, p. 8; *Mecklenburg. Jahrbücher*, VII, 156). Akin to the Wilzi were the Redarii and the Uckri (Widukind, III, 54, "Uchri"), whence the name Ucker-Mark; the Lini or Lingones (Helmold, I, 2), the Hevelli (Thietmar, IV, 20; *Annal. Qued.*; *Annal. Magdbg.*; *Annal. Palid.*; Helmold, I, 88). Offshoots of the Sorben were the Lusizi (Thietmar, I, 9; VI, 39, 48), the Milzi, the Glomuzani or Daleminzi, the Siusli,

in modern East Holstein and Mecklenburg-Schwerin; the Wilzi and kindred tribes extended over modern Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Brandenburg, Mittelmark, and Uckermark, in the moor and marshland of the Spree, the Havel, and the Peene rivers; the Pomeranians were in what is today known as Pomerania along the seaboard; the Sorben were in the triangle included between the upper Elbe, the Erzgebirge, and the Saale.¹ The blood affinity between the Obodrites, the Wilzi, and the Poles was close; on the other hand, the Sorben were akin to the Czechs, or Bohemians.² Of these four grand groups of the Baltic Slavs, the confederacy of the Wilzi was most formidable.³ The Redarii were custodians of the great Slavonic temple at Rethra.⁴

The monarchical institutions of the Baltic Slavs were not highly developed. The tribes were not compact entities, nor did they exhibit that capacity for union manifested among the early Germans. Evidences of a closer union appear about 800, when the

the Plisni (Andree, *Wendische Wanderstudien*, pp. 29-38). Ljutizi was the Slav term; Wilzi the German. Adam of Bremen fantastically derives Wilzi from German *wild* and Ljutizi from German *Löwe*. His philology is at least a tribute to their warlike character. Widukind, III, 54, is the first author to indicate the territory occupied by the Wilzi. This German nomenclature first appears in the tenth century. Cf. *Annal. Sangall.*, maj. 955. The earlier German name for the Wilzi was Welatabi; see Einhard, *Vita Caroli*, chap. 15. Adam, II, 18, schol. 17, professes to have learned the early history of the warfare between the Saxons and the Redarii from an old Nordalbingian noble.

¹ See Guttman, "Die Germanisierung der Slawen in der Mark," *Forschungen zur Brand. u. Preuss. Gesch.*, IX (1897), 396-97; Wendt, I, 10-16.

² Guttman, p. 397, n. 1.

³ Adam of Bremen, III, 21.

⁴ Adam of Bremen, II, 18; III, 50, and Thietmar, VI, 23-25, both describe the temple. Adam says it was four days distant from Hamburg. Giesebrecht, *Nordlandskunde*, p. 167, and Lisch, *Mecklenburg. Jahrbücher*, III, 1, locate it near Prillwitz in Mecklenburg-Strelitz; Quandt, *Baltische Studien*, XXII, 214, on the other hand, fixes it at Dimmin at the mouth of the Peene. Guttman, p. 398, places it on the Tollenser See, near Neu-Brandenburg. A still greater Slavonic fane was on the island of Rügen at Arkona, sacred to the god Svantevit, among the Rani or Runi (*Adam of Bremen*, II, 18; Helmold, I, 6, 36; II, 12). Giesebrecht thinks that Adam is in error in locating the Rani in the island and on the mainland, too, since he also locates the Circumpani on the lower Peene (IV, 18, schol. 17). But Giesebrecht seems to have missed the force of the word *et* in the sentence in II, 19: "in hostio Peanis fluvii, ubi et Runi inhabitant." Considering how close the island of Rügen lies to the mainland, it would be strange if some part of this powerful tribe were not settled on the coast.

pressure of Charlemagne's conquests began to be felt, and a tendency is noticeable toward hereditary succession in the chieftainship.¹ But no ruling dynasty was ever established among the Baltic Slavs as in the case of the Poles and Bohemians, who early developed a strong ducal power, which with the former even grew into a kingship. Political tendencies among them were centrifugal, and there seem to have been many small chieftains.²

As to social structure: there was a landed nobility,³ a large free class composed of rude farmers, cattle raisers, and bee keepers; fishing, perhaps, was the main source of livelihood, as was natural with a people living in so wet a country as lower Germany was in the Middle Ages; slaves were numerous and were employed as field hands and artisans;⁴ tribe enthralled tribe, and for centuries the slave marts of the Slavonic peoples supplied both Byzantium and the Germans of the West.

If the political institutions of the Baltic Slavs were rudimentary, their religious institutions, on the other hand, were highly developed. The priests were the most influential element in their society and enjoyed almost monarchical power. The temples were supported by tithes and possessed large tracts of land.⁵ The ritual seems to have been elaborate. The Slavs deified the forces of nature, and each tribe had its favorite sanctuary.⁶ A black horse, sacred to the local god, was an object of great veneration in several places. The island of Rügen was the last refuge of the cult, where it was stamped out in 1168.⁷ But it is not altogether an idle fancy which still sees the ruins of the great shrine of Arkona amid the thick beech forests

¹ Einhard's *Annals*, p. 823; Guttman, *op. cit.*, 398, n. 2.

² Guttman, p. 399, nn. 3, 4. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 399, n. 1. ⁴ Wendt, II, p. 9.

⁵ "Extra quorum sententiam nichil agi de publicis rebus fas est, adeo metuuntur propter familiaritatem deorum vel potius demonum."—Adam of Bremen, IV, 18. "Flaminem suum non minus quam regem venerantur."—Helmold, I, 6 (end). "Tributa annuatim."—Helmold, II, 12.

⁶ Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, III, 84-85, has collected all the references to the temples of the Wends.

⁷ See the articles by J. Kornerup in the Danish *Aarboger for Nord. Oldk. og Hist.*, for the years 1878, 1879, and 1881—especially the last—for the supplanting of Wendish heathenism in Pomerania and Rügen by Christianity, and the founding of Danish Cistercian monasteries there.

which yet cover the island. The semicircular mound fifty feet in height near the little lake of Hertha-See, and the Hochilgord Hill were probably once places of Wendish sacrifice.¹

Modern history both in Spanish America and in North America offers a melancholy example of the contact of a "higher" with a "lower" race.² The history of the long and harsh relations of the Germans with the Baltic Slavs in the Middle Ages is a mediaeval and relatively unfamiliar example of "a phenomenon of familiar occurrence in later history of the contact of nature peoples with a ruling race."³ Considering the fact that the Baltic Slavs had no inheritance of civilization from Rome and the church to help them along as the Germans of the fifth century had possessed, their culture was quite as high as that of the early Germans and promised as much. The utter destruction of their material and moral culture between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries is a fact which every student of the history of civilization must deplore. Henry I, when he captured Jana, put the village to pillage and massacred the adult inhabitants.⁴ After the battle of Lenzen all prisoners were put to the edge of the sword.⁵ Otto I was no more humane. The victory of Racknitz was followed by a butchery which lasted till nightfall; seven hundred prisoners were massacred before the eyes of the conquered Slav chief. Gero, the famous margrave, treacherously slew thirty Wend chieftains whom he had lured to a banquet under pretense of peace.⁶ Henry the Lion and the

¹ Upon the institutions and the religion of the Wends see *Cambridge Mediaeval History*, II, chap. xiv; Hauck, *Kirchengesch. Deutschlands*, III, 69-87; Schulze, *Kolonisierung*, pp. 19-43, 86-116; Lavissee, *La Marche de Brandebourg*, pp. 10-15; Wendt, *op. cit.*, I, 16-18; Guttman, *op. cit.*, 400-403; Bernard, *De Adamo Bremensi Geographo* (1895), pp. 63-71; Fisher, *Mediaeval Empire*, II, 3-6. Thietmar of Merseburg (ca. 1000), *Helmold* (ca. 1175), *Chronica Slavorum*, and Ebbo, *Vita Ottonis*, ep. *Babenberg.*, especially I, chaps. 21 and 52, are the fullest sources.

² Cf. Bourne, *Spain in America*, p. 256.

³ Bourne, *op. cit.*, p. 211, and n. 2. Widukind, II, chap. xx, is interesting as the reaction of a tenth-century German's *Kultur* toward the culture of the Wends.

⁴ Widukind, I, 35.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 36.

⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 55; II, 20. Thietmar of Merseburg, IX, 2, approves of these cruelties. The events here alluded to completely conquered the Sorben, who henceforward were passive. Their further history does not enter into this article.

Teutonic knights in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were no whit less cruel.¹

Neither the German church nor the German nobles were willing to let time work out the problem of race-contact between the German and the Slav, and permit the gradual transfusion of blood between them and the slow transforming influences of civilization to resolve the issues. There can be little doubt that this might have been possible.²

The missionary zeal of the mediaeval German church was hardened with an alloy of worldly self-interest which gave a harsh edge to its pious professions, and the cure of souls was prevailingly subordinated to its hunger for land and its appetite for rich endow-

¹ See Hauck, III, 91. For German contempt of the Slav see *Fredeg. Chron.*, IV, 68; *Monk of St. Gall*, II, 12; Thietmar, III, 17; Adam of Bremen, II, 45 (schol.); Helmold, I, 16.

The comment of Cosmas of Prague (ca. 1045-1125), the first Slavonic historian of the western Slavs, is interesting in this particular: "Perpendit enim innatam Teutonicis superbiam, et quod semper tumido fastu habeant despectui Sclavos et eorum linguam."—*Chron.*, I, chap. 40; *MGH. SS*, IX, 62; cf. *ibid.*, X, 84. For centuries *Wend* and "heathen" were synonymous terms to the Germans (Widukind, III, 68; *Annal. Hildesh. anno 1056; Dipl.*, I, 146, No. 65, anno 945; cf. Hauck, III, 84).

² The chronicles have preserved a number of examples of cross-marriages between the aristocracy of both races. About the year 1000 a certain Wendish nobleman named Pribislav eloped with Matilda, the sister of Dietrich of the Nordmark, who was a nun in a convent in Magdeburg. Pribislav was assassinated by two Saxons who were hired by the angry margrave; whereupon his brother, who had forsaken paganism and become a priest under the German name Liudolf, abandoned his cowl and set forth to avenge his brother's murder, but was apprehended and returned to the church by Henry II. (See the account in Thietmar, IV, 64.) Matilda afterward fell into the hands of a Slav adventurer named Boliliut, an ex-companion of a Saxon outlaw named Kiza, who took her to wife. Helmold, I, 13, cites the case of an Obodrite chieftain named Billug who married the sister of Wago, bishop of Oldenburg. The border was the home of the German outlaw, who fraternized with the Wends (Helmold, I, 19). The most notorious instance of this is the case of the two nephews of Hermann Billung, Wicmann and Ecbert, who quarreled with their uncle and fled to the protection of two Obodrite chieftains, Nako and Stoinef (Widukind, III, 50-51; *Annals of Quedlinburg; Annals of Hildesheim*, 955; Thietmar, II, 6, 12-13). In this connection the observation of Polish historian Dlugoss as to the same process in Poland is interesting ". . . Prefecti castrorum et munitio civitatum cis Albim sitarum ab obedientia deditioeque Miecslai regis regni sui Poloniae deficere ceperunt ignavia desidiaque regis et Almanorum affinitate, qua invicem dando accipiendoque uxores junxerant eis defectionis materiam."—*Hist. Polon.*, ed. Lips, 1711, tome I, book II, p. 184.

ments. As early as 591 the synod of Aquileia, representing the Bavarian church, had complained of the tyranny of the Frankish church.¹ Through the efforts of Boniface, the organizer of four Bavarian bishoprics, the Bavarian law of the eighth century "encouraged" donations to the church to the point of compulsion, and punished the murder of a bishop with an impossibly huge fine, or slavery. In the same century, in Ober-Franken, again through Boniface's zeal, and that of Sturmi his disciple, the see of Würzburg (741) and the monasteries of Fulda (744) and Hersfeld (769) were founded and heavily endowed with manors and tithes.²

The missionary propaganda of the German church in the Middle Ages was largely a money-making proposition.³ Christians had to pay tithes, so the "saving of souls" became a lucrative commercial interest. The border peoples, if conquered but unconverted, were subject only to tribute, and the wealth thus acquired went into secular coffers. But evangelization offered spiritual rewards and declared substantial dividends of a material nature for the benefit of the church.⁴ Alcuin, in the time of Charlemagne, rebuked Bishop Arno of Salzberg for inhuman treatment of the Slavs in Styria and Carinthia, upon whom he cruelly imposed the tithe.⁵ The sordid motives of the German church, in spite of its smooth

¹ Riezler, *Geschichte Bayerns*, I, 90.

² For Würzburg see Kretschmer, sec. 176; for Fulda and Hersfeld, sec. 103.

³ Adam of Bremen, III, 22.

⁴ Lavissee, *La Marche de Brandebourg*, p. 37, caustically remarks: "Charlemagne, en assignant aux sièges épiscopaux qui auraient envoyé des missionaries en pays païens une part des revenus payés par les convertis, avait excité l'avidité en même temps que l'émulation des évêques, et les conflits qui éclataient entre les divers diocèses n'étaient point faits pour persuader aux païens que les prêtres de Jésus-Christ ne voulaient que le salut de leurs âmes."

⁵ *Monum. Alcuin.*, ed. Jaffé, VI, 301, Ep. 64. So, too, in 796 Alcuin, after the conquest of the Avars, asked Charlemagne to "consider whether it is a good thing to impose on a rude people like this at the beginning of their faith the yoke of tithes, exacted in full amount and from every house." Alcuin even had the moral courage and the critical acumen to challenge the whole system of imposing tithes. For he goes on: "It is to be considered whether the apostles, who were taught by Christ himself and sent forth by him for the evangelization of the world, ever ordered the exaction of tithes, or demanded that they should be given to them."—Ep. 67; cf. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, VIII, 149.

language and professions of piety, come out strongly in the correspondence between Boniface and Pope Zacharias in 751. Boniface had propounded the question to the pope whether the tithe should be imposed upon Slav serfs working the church lands. The reply of the pontiff is luminous for the light which it casts upon the inner motives of the church. "Yes," said Zacharias, "for if they do not pay tribute, they will think the land is theirs. But if they are made to pay tithes they will know who is lord of the land."¹

When German history passes from the Carolingians to the Saxons, we find Otto I (936-73) too heavily involved with the church to resist its demands. His father Henry I had dangerously estranged the German clergy. It was Otto's policy to mollify them. At the inception of his reign the chief peril to the crown lay in the great power of the feudal dukes. The bishops and abbots, threatened by their usurpations, inclined toward the crown, while the king, for his part, found one of the strongest features of his anti-feudal policy in elevating the clergy as a counterpoise to the high feudality. The lavish generosity of the Saxon kings toward the German church far surpassed that of the Carolingians. Of the 435 charters which have been preserved of the reign of Otto the Great, 122 are donations to the church.² Henry I had made but 5 donations to the clergy during his whole reign. It has been well said that:

Otto I perceived that under his father the church of Germany was fast becoming the prey of the nobility. The Bavarian duke had obtained from the Fowler the right to nominate to the Bavarian sees. If the example spread, the church in Germany would split into a number of tribal organizations which would intensify national differences, and possibly destroy the free circulation of talent through the kingdom. Otto was not choosing between a spiritual

¹ *Epp. Bonifacii*, No. 80, ed. Jaffé, III, 226: *Boniface*: "An census a Slavis Christianorum terras incolentibus recipiendus?" *Zacharias*: ". . . si enim tributo sederint, ipsam quandoque propriam sibi vindicabunt; si vero tributum dederint, norunt dominatorem ipsam habere terram." Cf. a similar response in *Monum. Boica*, XXVIII, 1, 268 (996), and see Giesebrecht, *Jahrbücher des deutschen Reichsunter Otto II und Otto III*, p. 29, n. 1. It is no wonder that apologists for Boniface, like Fischer, (*Bonifatius*, pp. 204 ff.), endeavor to disprove the genuineness of the letters. Sommerlad, *Die wirtschaftliche Thätigkeit der Kirche in Deutschland*, I, chap. iv, and Stütz, *Gesch. des kirchlichen Benefizialwesens* (1895), are valuable accounts of the land policy of the church in Germany in the seventh and eighth centuries.

² Hauck, III, 58, n. 5.

church on the one hand and a political church on the other. The alternative was between a church dominated and bullied by dukes and counts, and a church controlled and utilized for the service of the nation by the king.¹

In this policy Otto I had the precedent of Charlemagne, who made large use of the church as an instrument of government. But the Saxon rulers went farther:

These four pious emperors pile donation upon donation. Whereas we have 42 charters of donation proceeding from Louis the German and 37 from Arnulf, we have 122 from Otto the Great. Again, the grants of market rights and toll rights made during this one reign to ecclesiastical foundations exceeded all the grants taken together made by Otto's predecessors. The munificence of the Saxon emperors builds up the territories of the great Rhenish sees, creates the archiepiscopal see of Magdeburg, invests the bishop of Würzburg with ducal powers, creates the new see of Bamberg, endows and founds numerous Saxon abbeys and nunneries, and heaps political and judicial powers upon ecclesiastical foundations.²

Under such privileged circumstances the Saxon clergy, perhaps more hungry for landed possessions than even the lay feudality, was not to be deterred from the lucrative business of evangelizing the Wends across the lower Elbe River, whose "conversion" would pour tithes into their coffers and whose toil could be made to exploit the church's lands. It is charitable to indulge the thought that the missionary tradition of Anskar and the monastery of Corbie inspired the aspirations of the German church at this time. But the facts belie this rosy assumption. Charlemagne's conversion of the Saxons by force of arms had established a precedent fatal to the preservation of the liberties of the Baltic Slavs. The issue of the conversion of the Wends had first been raised by Boniface and the prospect had haunted the mind of the cultured and gentle Alcuin.³ Since then a century and a half had elapsed and nothing had been done. It was high time, argued the church. For it was unthinkable that the theory of the royal prerogative could tolerate rule over a pagan people.⁴

¹ Fisher, *Mediaeval Empire*, II, 78-79.

² *Ibid.*, II, 65. For detailed information on the Ottonian church policy see Hauck, III, 58 f.; Eggers, *Der königliche Grundbesitz im X. und XI. Jahrhundert*, Weimar, 1909.

³ *Monum. Alcuin.*, ed. Jaffé, VI, 165.

⁴ This idea comes out clearly in the coronation of Otto I. "Accipe hunc gladium," said the archbishop of Mainz, "quo eicias omnes Christi adversarios, barbaros et

In the case of Otto I, his religion was politic and his piety "practical" in the most concrete sense of that term. He was indifferent to the conversion of the Wends, but he could not be indifferent to the demands of the bishops. Accordingly his reign saw a terrible series of military expeditions and missionary forays across the lower Elbe against the Baltic Slavs, by which the land was conquered as far as the Peene River.¹ Precisely as Charlemagne had utilized the administrative system of the church to extirpate the Saxon tribal organization in Saxony,² so the apparatus of the German church was now imposed upon the subjugated Wends in order to crush them.³ "Ex nomine victorum provincias quoque vocabula sortitas." Beyond the Elbe a swarm of bishops arose, half houses of God, half fortresses. Oldenburg was the earliest episcopal erection at an unknown date.⁴ It was an ancient Wendish town, so old that it was called Old Town (Starigard).⁵ Havelberg was founded in 946, Brandenburg in 948,⁶ Merseburg in 967,⁷ Meissen and Zeitz (later removed to Naumburg) in 968.⁸

malos Christianos, auctoritate divina tibi tradita omni potestate totius imperii Francorum, ad firmissimam pacem omnium Christianorum."—Widukind, II, chap. i. For comments see Waitz, VI, 163 ff. The same thought is expressed by Frederick I in the *Canonizatio Caroli Magni* in 1166: "In fide quoque Christi dilatanda, et in conversione gentis barbaricae fortis athleta fuit, sicut Saxoniam et Fresoniam Hispanis quoque testantur et Wandali, quos ad fidem catholicam verbo convertit gladio."—Harz., *Conc.*, III, 399-400.

¹ Sommerfeld, *Gesch. der Germanisierung des Herzogtums Pommern*, p. 10.

² "Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae," Boretius, *MGH., Leges*, I, 2, No. 26, p. 68; cf. the spurious charter for Bremen in Sickel, *Acta Karol.*, II, 393-94, and the interesting statement of Adam of Bremen, I, chap. xiii: "Huic parrochiae decem pagos subjecimus, quos etiam abjectis eorum antiquis vocabulis et divisionibus in duas redigimus provincias, his nominibus appellantes, Wigmodiam et Lorgoe."

³ Cf. Widukind, II, 38; Adam of Bremen, II, 24; Thietmar, II, 20, 22; Helmold, I, 14, 17.

⁴ Hauck, III, 105, n. 5; Dehio, *Gesch. des Erzbistums Hamburg-Bremen*, Appendix XII; Courschmann, *Diözese Brandenburg*, p. 19, n. 3, think the year was 948. For further information see Kretschmar, *Historische Geographie von Mitteleuropa*, sec. 258.

⁵ "Ea quae Slavica lingua Starigard, hoc est antiqua civitas," says Helmoldus the Holsteiner antiquarian of the twelfth century, I, chap. xii. The Germans simply transliterated the name. The derivation is obvious. *Stara* means "old" and *gard* is the same as *grad*, a universal Slav suffix for town. The Serbian today distinguishes a part of his kingdom by the term *Stara Sribiya*—Old Servia.

⁶ Kretschmer, secs. 270-71.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sec. 267.

⁸ *Ibid.*, secs. 268-69.

Manors, tithes, tribute, were showered upon the new bishoprics in the Slav lands by the Ottos,¹ and the "New Plantation" for a season enjoyed great peace and prosperity.² "Through the mercy of God and the valor of Otto the Great," Helmold piously exclaims, "complete peace prevailed everywhere; the wastes of Wagria and of the province of Schleswig began to be peopled, nor was there any corner left which was not conspicuous for its towns and villages, and also its many monasteries."³

Forcible, wholesale conversion of the Obodrites, the Wilzi, etc., and the imposition of tithes and tribute became the order of the day.⁴ The synod of Tribur in 1036 resolved "quod omnes Sclavi decimas dent."⁵ The synod of Bamberg in 1059 expressly declared that increase of the tithes was a just motive for forcible conversion of the Slavs.⁶ These tithes were generally collected in corn, honey,

¹ "Munificentia principis Ottonis cumulati essent temporalium rerum affluentia, unde possent copiose largiri et favorem sibi populi consciscere."—Helmold, I, 12.

² "Novella Plantacio (Helmold, I, 12, 14) . . . in summa prosperitate."—*Ibid.*, I, 13.

³ Helmold, I, 12.

⁴ "Ipse [Otto I] tanta virtute deinceps constrinxit, ut tributum et christianitatem pro vita simul et patria libenter offerrent victori, baptizatusque est totus gentilium populus."—Adam of Bremen, II, 5. "Pax continua fuit, Sclavi sub tributo servierunt."—*Ibid.*, II, 24. "Tribut und Christentum, so heisst es in charakteristischer Verbindung, mussten sie bieten, damit man sie bei Land und Leben lasse."—Guttman, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

⁵ "Constitutiones et acta pub. imperatorum et regum."—*MGH.*, I *Leges*, IV, p. 89, sec. 6; cf. Bresslau, *Jahrbücher Konrads*, II, 529.

⁶ Jaffé, V, 497-98, the bishopric of Bamberg was founded by Henry II in 1007, who detached Eastern Franconia ecclesiastically from the see of Würzburg. It was richly endowed by the emperor with the possessions of the banished Babenbergers, whose lands had passed by confiscation to the fisc in the reign of Ludwig the Child (900-911). Otto II gave them to Henry II of Bavaria, through whose accession to the German kingship in 1002 they again became a part of the crown lands. Bamberg was Henry II's favorite place of residence and the cathedral which he built and in which he lies buried is one of the finest examples of early Romanesque architecture in Germany. The see was expressly founded as a missionary base among the Slavs of the upper Main region. "Ut et paganismus Sclavorum destrueretur et Christiani nominis memoria perpetualiter inibi celebris habetur. . . . Per quam [ecclesiam] et de inimico humani generis in vicinas Sclavorum gentes Deo opitulante, triumphabit."—Jaffé, V, 27 and 31. For the founding of the see, see Gebhardt, *Handbuch d. deutschen Gesch.*, I, 277, sec. 4; Stein, *Gesch. Frankens*, p. 85; Loshorn, *Die Begründung des Bistums Bambergs*; *Jahrbücher Heinrichs II*, Vol. II, 28; Bernhard, *Lothar von Supplinburg*, pp. 152 f. For Slav serfs on church lands see Waitz, *Deutsche Verfassungsgesch.*, V, 157, n. 3; *Jahrbücher Heinrichs II*, pp. 28-31.

flax, hemp, and cattle,¹ data which show the primitive economy of the Slavonic peoples at this time. Helmold, in chap. xii describes with particularity the nature of the tithe and the method of collection in the bishopric of Oldenburg: "Dabatur autem pontifici annuum de omni Wagirorum sive Obotritorum terra tributum, quod scilicet pro decima imputabatur, de quolibet aratro mensura grani et XL resticuli lini et XII nummi puri argenti. Ad hoc unus nummus, precium colligentis. Slavicum vero aratrum par boum aut unus conficit equus."²

What the actual extent of the landed possessions of these, bishoprics beyond the Elbe was, or what the amount of their revenues, it is impossible to say. For they were all swept away, as will be seen shortly, in the great Wend rising of 983. Helmold confesses his inability to tell, save in general terms, the material possessions of the church in the "New Plantation." But judging from his comment, and from what we know to have been the condition in other Wendish territory—for example, in the Sorben land and in upper Franconia, where the bishopric of Bamberg was—regions which the storm of the Slav reaction did not reach, the revenues of the trans-Elban bishoprics must have been considerable.³ The church was a hard taskmaster and exacted heavy service from the Wendish peasantry reduced to serfdom or even slavery upon their own once free lands.⁴ The cynical aphorism of Ekkehard of St. Gall, "servi qui non timent, tument,"⁵ epitomizes

¹ A tithe in honey in Brandenburg is mentioned in 965: "totam decimam mellis in pagis . . . Plonim, Nicici, Sprewa ex utraque parte Sprewae."—*MGH.*, *Dip.* I, p. 418. So in the reign of Otto II, in 973 a honey tithe is recorded in the same place: "in Ploni . . . et in toto Morkeni totoque Drenzile et Hevelde."—*Ibid.*, II, 40. A tithe in honey or linen from the Slavs of the Main was granted by Arnulf in 889 to the bishop of Würzburg (Boehmer, *Regesta Imperii* [751-918], p. 745; Dümmler, *Gesch. des ostfränkischer Reiches*, III, 356).

² Cf. I, 14, 88. He uses the words *resticuli lini* in I, 12, and *restes lini* in I, 14. The terms are interchangeable, the latter, sing. *restis*, being more usual in mediaeval Latin. It is used in the sense of a bundle of sticks, of a last of fish, of a roll or bale of cloth, of a measure of grain, etc. Cf. Du Cange, *Glossarium*, s.v.

³ Helmold, I, 18.

⁴ Thietmar several times alludes to this unfree Wendish peasantry: II, 24; V, 6; VI, 37; VII, 15; cf. Jaffé, V, p. 652, 809; Waitz, V, 157, n. 3, and especially Schulze, *Kolonisierung*, pp. 98-116.

⁵ Casus S. Galli, *MGH.*, SS. II, p. 403.

the policy of the hard and worldly feudalized clergy of mediaeval Germany.

Perhaps one must go to Spanish America in the sixteenth century for an adequate parallel to this history of the spoliation of a weaker people by an avaricious priest class backed up by the sword of a powerful government.¹ The pious observations of Bernal Diaz on the benefits conferred upon the Peru of the Incas by Spanish civilization and Christianity have their prototype in the adamantine sanctimoniousness of Thietmar of Merseburg when he reflects upon the "mercies" which the German church had brought to the Sorben.²

In its greed for land the church was even divided against itself. This comes out clearly in the case of the diocese of Merseburg. The see was founded in 967 or 968.³ From 971 to 981 Gisiler was the bishop thereof.⁴ But when in 981 he was elevated to the archbishopric of Magdeburg, he maneuvered so as to secure the abolition of the see of Merseburg under the pretext that Halberstadt had never given its written consent to Merseburg's erection ("sine consensu atque subscriptione canonica"). The bishops of Zeitz and Meissen sustained him in this course, the motive of which was plain. The three coveted the lands of Merseburg and plotted the spoliation of the diocese to the aggrandizement of their own sees. The upshot of the scheme was that the diocese of Merseburg was abolished and its lands partitioned among the three avaricious bishops. It was not restored until 1004, when Henry II, whose bold policy in the face of the bishops will soon be noticed, revived Merseburg again.⁵

¹ For development of this parallel see Bourne, *Spain in America*, pp. 195-201, 259-65.

² Thietmar, IX, chap. iii: ". . . consuetudines . . . quamvis dirae, tamen interdum laudabiles." See the whole chapter as an example of clerical moralizing and compare the legislation of the synod of Tribur in the year 1036 (*MGH., Const. I [Leges 4]*, 89, No. 6). Helmold, I, 84, points to the German substitution of trial by battle or by hot plowshares for the methods of Slavonic administration of justice as an evidence of "progress." "Sed offerebant criminibus pulsatos sacerdoti ferro vel vomeribus examinandos."

³ Kretschmer, sec. 267.

⁴ Thietmar, I, 37.

⁵ For this scandalous affair see Thietmar, III, 16; Gebhardt, I, 272, and Kretschmer, sec. 267, with literature cited.

The church in the Wendish lands was inspired by no genuine religious zeal. Its motives were wholly material. The bishops' seats were simply offices of exploitation. Manorial bailiffs and stewards in the service of the bishops were numerous, but there was no thought of priestly ministrations.¹ The only actual churches in the land were in the cathedral places, where the bishop's authority was established and where the center of the system was. Elsewhere there were merely a few scattered chapels, with a single priest, and these were not for the conversion of the Slavs, but to minister to the isolated German communities, chiefly composed of soldiers and wandering merchants. Most of the bishops were intriguing Lorrainers and Flemings like Adalbert of Magdeburg.² Of all the German bishops who sat in these Wendish sees in the tenth and the early eleventh century, there is only one in whom any real spirituality is discernible—Boso of Merseburg, its first incumbent; and even in this case the evidence is somewhat dubious, for it rests on the flattering unctiousness of an official document.³ However, Thietmar has preserved for us an anecdote which is so ingenuous that it has an authentic ring, and shows that this Bavarian monk had some of the milk of human kindness in him. Thietmar records how Boso composed a little manual in the Slav tongue for the instruction of his flock, and that he taught them to chant the *Kyrie eleison*, at the same time "exponens eis hujus utilitatem." But to his bewilderment these barbarian children of the forest mistook the words *Kyrie eleison*, which they naturally did not understand the meaning of, for their own Slav word for elderbush (*kriolosse*) and so sang.⁴

A certain familiarity with the Slavonic tongue must have been not unusual among some classes of the Germans, as military officers, merchants trading across the frontier, and at least some of the priesthood. Otto I spoke Slavonic,⁵ and Thietmar, for all his Saxon scorn of the race, must have understood the language. The

¹ "Aber von Pfarren ist nicht die Rede."—Guttman, *op. cit.*, p. 435.

² Hauck, III, 95.

³ "Multum jam in eadem Scavorum gente convertenda sudavit."—Urk. Otto I, in *MGH., Dip.* I, p. 502.

⁴ Thietmar, II, 36-37.

⁵ Widukind, II, 36.

internal evidence of his *Chronicle* proves it.¹ A few of the Wendish chieftains embraced the Christian religion for self-advantage.² But the mass of the Slavs must have accepted Christianity as they accepted German domination, superficially and morosely.³ To most of them for generations the founder of Christianity was the "Teutonicus Deus,"⁴ who, they must surely have thought, had come to bring not peace but a sword. Even as late as the twelfth century the Christianity of the Sorben was very superficial and chiefly inspired by dread of the German power.⁵

The blame for the inhuman treatment of the Wendish peoples along the German border must be divided between the Saxon clergy and the Saxon nobles, especially the ruling house of the Billunger. The feud between the church and the nobles was a bitter one and lasted for years.⁶ The nobles resented the fondness of the Ottos for churchmen. Above all they resented the policy

¹ Cosmas, I, 23, speaks of "Dethmarus Saxo olim, orationis causa Pragam profectus"; and of "Theadagus Saxo, lingua perfecte imbutus Sclavonica."

² A Sorben knight named Zolunta was a member of Otto II's bodyguard in his ill-fated Calabrian expedition in 982 (Thietmar, III, 23; cf. Giesebrecht, *Kaiserzeit*, II, 168), and there is mention of some others like him (Helmold, I, 16 [Schol. 30]); "Gesta episcop. Camerac. Contin.," *MGH.*, SS. VII, p. 518. Liutprand, *Legatio*, chap. xxiii, alludes to Wendish hostlers and stablemen.

³ Adam of Bremen, III, 1, distinguishes the Slavs in the archiepiscopal diocese of Bremen-Hamburg into *pagani* and *pseudo-Christiani*. Compare the comment of Wipo: "Liutici vocantur, qui olim semichristiani, nunc per apostacam nequitiam omnino sunt pagani."—*Vita Chuonrici*, chap. xxxiii.

⁴ Ebo, *Vita S. Ottonis episcop. Babenb.*, III, 1.

⁵ *Vita S. Winthar.* (1062-63), ep. Merseb. *MGH.*, SS. XII, p. 246: "Sclavorum genti, quorum copiosam multitudinem error adhuc ydolatriae detinebat"; *Mirac. Heinr.* *MGH.*, SS. IV, p. 816: "vix vel tenuem fidei videntur habere scintillam." The *Miracula* were written at the end of the twelfth century (Wattenbach, *DGQ.*, II, 384; cf. Hauck, III, 135, n. 6). A letter written by a clerk of Liège to Udo of Naumburg (died 1148) is to the same effect: "Ultra non christianam Salam inter agrestem et barbaram Sclavorum nationem" (cited by Hauck, III, 135, n. 7). Thietmar of Merseburg (I, 3) says that the Wends venerated their own temples more than the Christian churches: "Hunc [Glomuzi fons] omnis incola plus quam aecclesias spe quamvis dubia, veneratur et timet." The whole paragraph is interesting for the light it throws upon the Slavonic religion. See Hauck, IV, 555-63, for the general growth of the church in the Sorben March in the twelfth century.

⁶ Cf. Giesebrecht, Otto II, pp. 91 ff.; *Kaiserzeit* I, pp. 604 ff., 850; Giesebrecht *Wendische Geschichten*, I, pp. 264 ff.; Hirsch, *Jahrbücher Heinrichs II*, Vol. III, 183-87; Guttman, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

of converting the Slavs, for the church's tithes reduced the tribute proportionally. They were content to leave the Wends their own religion, their own leaders, their own laws, provided the Wends regularly paid tribute to them.¹ Saxon avarice, both of the nobles and of the clergy, is alleged time and again by Adam of Bremen and Helmold as the cause of German overthrow beyond the Elbe and the arrest of the eastward expansion of German colonization for one hundred and fifty years.² "I have heard," writes Adam of Bremen, "that the honest king of the Danes said that the Slav peoples would long since have been converted to Christianity if it had not been for the avarice of the Saxons."³ And Helmold mournfully records: "The princes divided the tribute among themselves. But no mention was made of Christianity. From which the insatiable avarice of the Saxons may be appreciated. They excel all other peoples in arms and the art of war; but they care more for tribute than they do for the winning of souls."⁴

In 983 the first of three formidable Slav rebellions against the tyranny of the Germans occurred. The bishoprics of Havelberg, Brandenburg, and Zeitz were wiped out; Hamburg was plundered and burned; a German army under leadership of the archbishop of Magdeburg, the bishop of Halberstadt, and the margraves of Lausitz, Meissen, and the Nordmark was beaten at Belkesheim.⁵

Under Henry II (1002-24) the German border policy initiated a new and striking course. At this time Boleslav of Poland was formidable to Germany, for he aimed to unite the whole group of separate and detached Slavonic tribes into one body, and narrowly missed so doing. The danger was a real one to Germany, for Boleslav had friends at the German court, among them Henry, margrave of the Bavarian Nordgau, Ernest of Austria, and the

¹ Sommerfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

² See Hauck, III, 250-51; Hirsch, *Jahrb. Heinrichs II*, Vol. III, 93 ff.; cf. Adam of Bremen, II, 46; III, 22; Helmold, I, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26.

³ Adam of Bremen, III, 22.

⁴ Helmold, I, 21; cf. Sommerlad, *Die wirtschaftliche Tätigkeit der Kirche in Deutschland*, II, 209.

⁵ Thietmar, III, 10-11; *Annal. Sax. anno 983*, MGH., SS. VI, p. 631; Giesebrecht, *Otto II*, 91 ff.; *Kaiserzeit*, I, 604 ff., 850; L. Giesebrecht, *Wend. Gesch.*, I, 264 ff.

king's own brother Brun.¹ In this peril Henry II, adroitly taking advantage of the hostility of the Wilzi and Redarii to the Polish policy of forcible union, promised them the unmolested enjoyment of their pagan religion in return for their support of the German cause against Boleslav.² Henry II was not the supine instrument of the church that tradition has represented him to have been, but a resolute, far-sighted ruler without illusions.³ His statesmanship foiled the probable unification of the western Slavs and diverted Polish ambition eastward toward Russia, while at the same time allowing liberty to the slow process of Germanization of the border peoples to work out the solution through natural contact instead of by compulsory means.

The wisdom of Henry II's course was soon manifested. The bishops of Havelberg and Brandenburg returned to their devastated sees, and they and other former German towns, like Arneburg, were rebuilt. But unfortunately some of the German bishops learned nothing and forgot nothing. Benno, bishop of Oldenburg, instituted an inquisition into the former possessions of the diocese which so exasperated the Obodrites that they declared that rather than submit again to the heavy exactions of the church they would quit the country.⁴ A second Slav rebellion came in 1018, in which Mistislav, the Obodrite chieftain, and his half-Christianized adherents—for there were some Christian Slavs among them—severely suffered, and the trans-Elban bishops were again driven out.⁵

This second Slav revolt completed what that of 983 had left unfinished. The first blow had fallen upon Brandenburg and the

¹ Thietmar, V, 32, 35, 36, 38.

² Anno 1003—Thietmar, V, 21; VI, 23-25, 28.

³ See on this Hirsch, *Jahrbücher Heinrichs II*, Vol. I, 257 ff.; Vol. III, 364 ff. (by Breslau); Matthai, *Die Klosterpolitik Kaiser Heinrichs II*, Göttingen, 1877; Nitzsch, *Deutsche Gesch.*, I, 367; Guttman, *op. cit.*, 419.

⁴ See the detailed account in Helmold, I, 18.

⁵ Thietmar, III, 17 [10]; VIII, 5 [4], distinguishes between the reaction of 983 and 1018. The first was against the German *Herrschaft*, the second against the *Fürsten* and the church. He names the Wend leaders as Mistui and Mistivoi. The names mean two separate persons, and not the same man as Adam of Bremen, II, 40-41, and Helmold, I, 16, who follows Adam, say. Cf. Hirsch, *Jahrbücher Heinrichs II*, Vol. I, 478-86 (excursus of Usinger).

Havelland, but Nordalbingia had escaped. Now it too was devastated with fire and sword. The priests were slaughtered, the inhabitants dragged off to glut the slave marts along the Baltic coast, especially in the island of Rügen. Bishop Benno, the man primarily responsible for the insurrection, was absent from his post when this second wave of Slav fury swept the land. But sixty priests were captured and with hands tied behind their backs were whipped through the native towns and villages until they died of exhaustion. The work of the church for seventy years past in Nordalbingia went down in a twelvemonth.¹ Gottschalk, the Obodrite chief, who at first had been tolerant of Christianity, and whose son was educated in the cloister school in Lüneburg, became the formidable avenger of the wrongs of his people.²

More than a century and a half later, when the labors of Adolph of Holstein and Henry the Lion permanently established German domination across the great river, Helmold, the Holsteiner priest and author of that vivid record of German eastward expansion, the *Chronica Slavorum*, picturesquely described the ruins which still could be seen of churches, monasteries, and tiny German hamlets which were destroyed in these two uprisings of the Slavs.³

But neither the violence of this second Slav rebellion nor the imprecations of the clergy frightened Henry II into renouncing the alliance he had made with the Slavs of the Elbe. Unexpected and ferocious as the insurrection of 1018 was, bitter as the blow must have been to his liberal practice, hostile as the resentment of the bishops was—especially of those who had lost their seats—yet the emperor's confidence in the essential justice and wisdom of his policy was unshaken. He had the justice to perceive that the

¹ "Omnes igitur Sclavi qui inter Albiam et Oddaram . . . absciderunt a corpore Christi."—Adam of Bremen, II, 42; Helmold, I, 19.

² See the interesting conversation of Gottschalk, reported by Helmold, I, 19, with a Holsatian refugee whom he met unrecognized in the way.

³ "Adhuc restant antiquae illius habitacionis pleraque indicia, precipue in silva, quae ab urbe Lutilinburg per longissimas tractus Sleswich usque protrahitur, cujus vasta solitudo et vix penetrabilis inter maxima silvarum robora sulcos pretendit, quibus jugera quondam fuerant dispertita. Urbium quoque seu civitatum formam structura vallorum pretendit. In plerisque etian rivis qui propter molendina stipandis aquis aggeres congesti sunt ostendunt omnem saltum a Saxonibus quondam inhabitatum."—Helmold, I, 12.

Wilzi, the Wagri, the Obodrites, etc., had been "driven to the necessity of paganism" by the cruel oppression of the clergy and Duke Bernhard of Saxony.¹

Conrad II (1024-39), no friend of churchmen, attempted to adhere to the policy of Henry II. But the prejudice of the clergy and the continual molestation of the Obodrites and the Wilzi by the Saxons jeopardized this statesman-like course more and more. For over thirty years the strong hand of these two rulers sought to restrain both the Saxon clergy and the Saxon nobles. Wipo, the biographer of Conrad, relates an incident which strikingly illustrates the conditions and the difficulties along the frontier. In 1033 the border situation became so tense that the emperor went thither to investigate. The Wends accused the Saxons of continually breaking the peace. The Saxons blamed the Wends. The latter offered to put the determination of the question to the judgment of God in trial by battle. Conrad at first hesitated, having scruples whether a heathen could participate in a process of law in which the invisible presence of God was supposed to be, but finally consented. Each side chose a champion, and the Slav champion won, to the great elation of his compatriots and the chagrin of the Saxons, especially the clergy, whose prestige as dispensers of the will of the Almighty was somewhat injured.²

But the wise plan of the Franconian emperors was increasingly imperiled by the ambition of the Billunger dukes of Saxony and the avarice of the Saxon clergy. Up to the death of Duke Benno in 1011 the Billungers had been loyal, though with diminishing fidelity, to the German crown. But with the accession of Bernhard to the dukedom the Billunger breach both with the crown and with the church widened. As we have seen, the Obodrites were the mildest of the Slav tribes of the lower Elbe, and when the first wild flame of rebellion subsided, Christianity began slowly to recover in Wagria under the active policy of Archbishop Unwan of Bremen (died 1029) and Bishop Benno of Oldenburg, whose tactless

¹ Thietmar, VIII, 4; Adam of Bremen, II, 40, 41, 42, 46; Hirsch, *Jahrb. Heinrichs II*, Vol. III, pp. 93 ff.

² Wipo, *Vita Chuonradi*, chap. xxxiii; for a commentary on the legal technicalities see Waitz, VIII, 30; Breslau, II, 96-97.

inquisition into the former possessions of the church there precipitated the rebellion of 1018.¹

The Saxon duke, jealous of the enrichment of the church, did everything he could to thwart the bishop, and at the same time attempted to double the tribute exacted of the Obodrites.² Four manors, in particular, were a bone of contention between the duke and the bishop.³ The Obodrites, caught between the hammer of the bishop and the anvil of the duke, preferred the bishop's rule as the lesser of two evils, and when the dispute was referred to the emperor, testified to the previous existence of the episcopal tithe and promised to pay it as before.⁴ This was in 1021, and was the immediate ground of the fierce feud which widened into open war between the Billunger dukes and the bishops of Northern Germany, and which reached an acute phase in the war of Duke Ordulf against Adalbert of Bremen in the early years of the reign of Henry IV.

Thus the peace and prosperity of Nordalbingia and Holstein after the second Slav rebellion subsided, of which Adam of Bremen boasts, was actually as precarious as the quarter of a beleaguered town beyond the immediate reach of the shells. Billunger hatred of the church's ascendancy left nothing undone to embarrass it.⁵ Moreover, the new king of Denmark, whose ambition for Danish expansion on the mainland had been nourished by Canute, coveted a wider dominion. Conrad II, Canute, and Archbishop Unwan of Bremen had amicably arranged their somewhat conflicting interests in the North.⁶ But when Canute died in 1035 and Conrad II in 1039, political conditions in Northern Germany were changed. Duke Bernhard's son Ordulf was married to

¹ Helmold, I, 18. Thietmar of Merseburg, when Henry II restored the bishopric and appointed him to it, exhibited the same greed for land and started proceedings to recover possession of the lands which had passed to others in the dismemberment of the diocese. He did not recoil from acts of violence in so doing, and became bitterly involved with Hermann and Eckhard, sons of the margrave Eckhard, as a result (Thietmar, IX, 20-22).

² Wendt, I, 69.

³ Helmold, I, 18, and nn. 4-6, ed. Schmeidler.

⁴ *Ibid.*, cf. Giesebrecht, *Kaiserzeit*, II, 619 f.

⁵ Adam of Bremen, III, 22.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 54; Breslau, *Forschungen*, X, 612, puts the date as 1035 instead of 1025.

a daughter of Magnus of Denmark. The alliance boded ill for the interests of either emperor or church in the North. Things became tenser than before. The Danish king coveted possession of the mouths of the rivers flowing into the Baltic in the interest of Danish Baltic trade, while the Saxon duke wanted to provoke the Obodrites and Wilzi into a new revolt which would destroy the churches again being established in their lands, use the rising as a pretext for Saxon intervention, and establish his dominion and tribute over them without any competition from the church.

The Saxon-Danish alliance was formed with the object of effecting this double partition. In pursuance of the plan Ordulf and King Magnus, in 1043, fell upon the Wends at Lyrskog Heath, near Hadeby in Schleswig (September 28), a victory which clinched the Danish capture of Wollin, the most important trading town of the Baltic Slavs at the mouth of the Oder River in 960, which the Danes had renamed Jomsburg. The future was to see a bitter strife between the Germans and the Danes for possession of the Pomeranian coast as a result of this intrigue. But of more immediate importance was the effect upon Nordalbingia. Against the double onslaught the Obodrites were powerless. Their capacity to resist was also hampered by their division into a pagan and a Christian group, the latter under another Gottschalk. Probably nothing but the loyalty of these Christian Wends to the faith, in spite of all the abuse of them by the church, saved Nordalbingia and Holstein from a second eclipse of the church there at this time.¹ Unfortunately for Germany the emperor Henry III during this time was warring against the Bohemians and Hungarians, or else in Italy, and could not interfere. Helmold's comment, which echoes Adam of Bremen's doleful observation, is full of depression: "De Christianitate nulla fuit mentio."²

At this critical juncture, when the affairs of the North were full of tension, friction, and peril, Henry III died (October 5, 1056), leaving the crown to Henry IV, who was a little child, and Germany

¹ For the extensive source references and literature to the battle of Hadeby and its results see Richter, *Annalen*, II, 361-63; cf. K. Gjerset, *History of the Norwegian People*, I, 275 (1915).

² Adam of Bremen, III, 22; Helmold, I, 21.

fell upon evil days. The most statesman-like man in the country was the great archbishop of Bremen, Adalbert (1043-72). But he had bitter enemies in the Saxon duke and his son, and, in his rival for the regency, Archbishop Anno of Cologne. Adalbert was of a noble Saxon family and the ambition which, if he had been a layman, would have driven him to strive for the enlargement of his feudal prerogative and the widening of his feudal lands found a broader field of ambition in his ecclesiastical office. His dream was to convert his archdiocese into an immense patriarchate, having ecclesiastical sway over lower Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and even Greenland.¹ For the realization of this dream of creating a gigantic principality covering the whole Christian north of Europe Adalbert actually declined the papacy in 1044.

Under Adalbert's influence Bremen became the foremost city of Northern Europe. It was the center of northern learning, the chief emporium of the commerce of the North Sea and the Baltic. Distinguished foreigners of many nations and many talents met together in Adalbert's court—Italians, French, English, Irish, Greeks, Jews, scholars, musicians, painters, physicians, merchants, travelers.²

The Baltic Slavs were to have formed a vassal state of the German kingdom within this huge orbit,³ with the Christian Obodrite duke Gottschalk, as prince, after the manner of the relation

¹ For the mediaeval church in Greenland see K. Gjerset, *op. cit.*, I, 197-204; Major's ed. of *Voyages of the Venetian Brothers N. and A. Zeno* (Hakluyt Soc., 1873), pp. lxxxvii, 17; Beamish, *Saga of Eric the Red*; Crantz, *History of Greenland*, 1767.

² The names of some of these persons have been preserved, as John of Ireland; Gualdo Gallicus (*Hamb. Urkundenb.*, No. 101); Trasmundus the artist-monk (Bruno, *De Bello Saxonico*, I, 4); Guido, an Italian musician (Schumacher, *Brem. Jahrb.*, I, 153, conjectures he may have been Guido of Arezzo; cf. Adam of Bremen, II, 66); Aristo, probably a Byzantine Greek; Adamatus, from the medical school in Salerno; Bovo, a famous traveler who had been three times to Jerusalem and even to Cairo. For larger information see Adam of Bremen, III, 35-38, 44; for Adalbert's revenues see Adam of Bremen, II, 45; Dehio, *Gesch. des Erzbistums Hamburg-Bremen*, I, 175-277; Giesebrecht, *Kaiserzeit*, III, 95-138, 153-66; Beazeley, *Dawn of Modern Geography*, II, 516-21; K. Maurer, "Islands und Norwegens Verkehr mit dem Süden im IX. bis XIII. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, II, 446; Riant, *Pélerinages des Scandinaves en Terre Sainte*, p. 58.

³ "Sclavos ita perdomuit ut eum [Adalbertum] quasi regem timerent."—Adam of Bremen, III, 18.

of Poland and Bohemia to the German crown.¹ To be sure, the Obodrites were yet half pagan and the Wilzi wholly so. But Gottschalk's loyalty and organized missionary effort on the part of the church was counted upon to remedy this condition. Adalbert, unlike any former bishop in the North, worked hand in hand with the Christian Obodrites. He divided the bishopric of Oldenburg into three parts, creating two new Slavonic dioceses for them—Mecklenburg and Ratzeburg—and founded cloisters in Oldenburg, Ratzeburg, and Lenzen.² Henry III while he had lived had furthered Adalbert's ideas, for their realization would have spread the power of the empire too. Moreover, the emperor needed the support of Adalbert in Saxony which was now dangerously alienated and even hostile to the German crown. The absence of Anno of Cologne at the Council of Mantua gave Adalbert his chance to take advantage of the favor of young Henry IV, and for two years (1064-66) he had things much his own way.

But the prospect of the speedy conversion of the Baltic Slavs roused the fury of the Billunger, for they had no mind to see the tribute diminished by the extension of the church's tithes.³ "He shall not rest," said Duke Ordulf of Adalbert, "while I or my house last." Both parties assiduously built castles and the north country flamed with war.⁴

The German church was divided into two camps. Anno of Cologne was supported by the archbishop of Magdeburg and the bishops of Halberstadt, Trier, Minden, and Utrecht, as well as by the leading Saxon nobles.⁵ At Tribur in January, 1066, Henry IV was forced to dismiss Adalbert, who fled to Bremen. Then followed four terrible years. The Billunger fell upon Bremen with fire and sword and wrecked the land. Adalbert found refuge in the strong imperial fortress of Goslar, whence he sent the proffer of a thousand manors of his diocese as the price of peace to Magnus

¹ "Gottschalk's Plan war die Gründung eines grossen wendischen Einheitstaates auf christlicher Grundlage und im Bunde mit dem Reich."—Otto Bitense, *Mecklenb. Gesch.* (1912), p. 19; cf. Guttman, *op. cit.*, p. 419; Wendt, I, 73.

² Adam of Bremen, III, 20; Helmold, I, 22; Dehio, *op. cit.*, Exkurs XIX.

³ Adam of Bremen, III, 40, 42.

⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 43; cf. 47-48. For the earlier history of the feud see II, 69; III, 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, III, 34, 46.

Billung, Duke Ordulf's son. In the end the bishopric was deprived of two-thirds of its possessions, half of the spoil going to the Billunger and half to their partisans. The indomitable Adalbert spent three years in his ruined city, still dreaming of the grandeur he had hoped for and laboring for the reconstruction of the dilapidated diocese.¹ At last Henry IV, who had emancipated himself in 1070 from the control of the combined clerical and feudal opposition around him, recalled Adalbert. But in March, 1072, Adalbert died, as tragically as Wolsey, save for the love of his king for him. Adam of Bremen says that in his last hours he reproached himself for having wasted his life in pursuit of earthly power. But the pious historian's moralizing² does not disguise the fact that Adalbert was a big and forceful personality who wrought strenuously for the enlargement of the life and the history of Northern Germany. In the same year his great enemy Duke Ordulf also died.

Meanwhile what had been the effect of these events upon the border situation? The pro-Christian inclinations of Gottschalk and the Obodrites had slowly provoked the wrath of the other pagan Slavs along the Baltic coast farther toward the east, especially the Wilzi and the wilder Rugians, the guardians of the great Slavonic fane on the island of Rügen. They perceived what was quite true, that the extension of Christianity would carry with it the subjugation of the free Slav tribes and that they were likely to pass under the onerous domination of the Saxon dukes. "They preferred to die rather than to become Christian," says Helmold, "or to pay tribute to the Saxon dukes."³ The sight of the newly established bishoprics of Mecklenburg and Ratzeburg infuriated them, and the pagan priests of their temples seem to have fanned the flame, as the Aztec priesthood inspired their people against the Spanish conquerors in Mexico.

In 1066 a third Slavonic rebellion came, the most formidable and effective of them all. The Wilzi, maddened by Saxon abuse and border aggression, rose in fury and decisively defeated the Saxons.⁴ The Christian Obodrite chief Gottschalk was killed.

¹ See Adam of Bremen's detailed account, III, 48, 54-56.

² *Ibid.*, III, 64. ³ Helmold, I, 25.

⁴ *Chron. Wirzib.*, MGH., SS. VI, p. 31; Wendt, I, p. 75.

Bishop John of Mecklenburg was dragged off a captive to the pagan temple at Rethra and there immolated to the high Slav god Redigast (November 10, 1066). Squads of Christian priests were whipped through the Slav towns till they died of exhaustion. The Slavonic bishoprics of Mecklenburg and Ratzeburg were obliterated; the cloisters at Oldenburg, Lenzen, and Ratzeburg destroyed. Even the bishopric of Hamburg was overrun.¹ Hundreds of the population were carried off into slavery, the castle demolished, the garrison thereof being derisively crucified by the furious victors. "Omnes Slavi," says Adam of Bremen, "facta conspiratione generali ad paganismum denuo relapsi sunt."² "Thereafter until the end of his life," writes Helmold, "Duke Ordulf vainly fought against the Slavs, but was never able to win a victory. Many times was he beaten by the pagans and was an object of derision unto his own people."

The Christian hero of the border was the fierce Burkhardt, bishop of Halberstadt, who in the winter of 1067-68 made a successful raid across the frozen marshes, devastated the country of the Wilzi, burned the Wendish temple at Rethra, and triumphantly rode back to Saxony upon the sacred black horse.³ In the next winter—winter campaigns were the only practicable method of invasion of so swampy a country⁴—young Henry IV repeated this feat.⁵ But the Wends more than held their own. In 1072 they twice attacked Hamburg. All Nordalbingia was a solitude.⁶

The Pontiac of this successful rebellion of the Baltic Slavs to throw off the German yoke was a Rugian chief named Kruto, who fixed his capital on an island at the confluence of the Trave and the Wochnitz rivers, where later, in 1143, Adolph of Holstein founded the present city of Lübeck.⁷ From his rise to power in 1066 until

¹ Hauck, III, 594.

² Adam of Bremen, III, 49-50; Helmold, I, 22-24.

³ *MGH.*, SS. III, p. 128.

⁴ "Terra etenim illa paganorum aquis et paludibus est plena."—*Annal. Altah.* 1069.

⁵ *Annal. Weissemb.* 1069; *Sigeb. Gembl.*, *MGH.*, SS. VI, p. 362.

⁶ "Pagani victores totam Nordalbingiam deinceps habuerunt in sua ditone, bellatoribusque [i.e., the vassals of the bishop] occisis aut in captivitate ductis, provincia in solitudinem redacta est."—Adam of Bremen, III, 63.

⁷ Helmold, I, 25, 57.

his death in 1093 Kruto was lord of the North.¹ Hundreds of the German population which had settled across the Elbe forsook the country, 600 Holsteiner families in a body emigrating into Thuringia.

But Kruto's power was a purely personal one. The inherent inability of Slavonic peoples to make large and firm combinations was manifested when he died. He had no successor. Fortunately for the Wends, Henry IV, although he had come forth victorious out of the conflict with the papacy and the revolted German baronage, was friendly to them. Saxony had been the storm-center of opposition to the Franconian house, and he perceived the strategic value of a border state friendly to him and hostile to the Saxons lying along the edge of Saxony. To the wrath of the Saxon clergy Henry IV not only befriended the Slavs, but even favored the continuance of paganism among them and opposed the church's missionary activity. His son Henry V, save for one isolated campaign against the Wilzi, adhered to the same policy.

But the seeming strength and security of the Baltic Slavs was illusory. In the first quarter of the twelfth century it is undeniable that Slavonic paganism was upon the defensive. Although it was true that "ultra Albiam illis temporibus rarus inveniebatur Christianus,"² nevertheless Christianity was slowly seeping into the trans-Elban lands, especially in the territory of Brandenburg, where the extension of the church can be obscurely discerned. In 1101 the margrave Udo temporarily recovered Brandenburg.³ There is record of a church at Leitzkau in 1114, and the archbishop of Magdeburg had a Christian Wendish *praefectus* in his service at Loburg in 1115.

¹ "Invaluitque Cruto . . . , obtinuitque dominium in universa terra Slavorum. Et attritae sunt vires Saxonum, et servierunt Crutoni sub tributo, omnis terra videlicet Nordalbingorum quae disterminatur in tres populos: Holzatos, Sturmarios, Thethmarchos [Holstein, Sturmaria, Ditmarsch]. Omnes hii durissimum servitutis jugum protaverunt omni tempore Crutonis."—Helmold, I, 26.

² *Annal. Pegav., MGH.*, SS. XVI, p. 252.

³ *Annal. Rosenv., MGH.*, SS. XVI, p. 102; *Annal. Sax.* 1101.

[To be concluded]