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The Military Orders in Times
of Change and Crisis



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Radosław Biskup, *Das Dokapitel von Samland (1285–1525)*, (Prussia Sacra, vol. 2), Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2007, 603 pp., ISBN 978-83-231-2102-2.

The study discussed here constitutes the second volume in the series *Prussia Sacra* from the *Historische Beschreibung der Kirche im Deutschordensland in Preussen* devoted to the functioning of church institutions in Prussia. Following the work of Glauert about the Pomesanian chapter, Biskup presents an extensive study concerning a group of Sambian canons and the legal issues connected with the functioning of a community which lived according to the rules of the Teutonic Order. The work is analytical-prosopographical. Its first part consists of five chapters including an introduction, a detailed discussion of sources, the problem of the foundation of the chapter (chapter 2), legal-institutional issues (chapter 3), the internal structure (chapter 4), and the estates belonging to the chapter over which it had territorial authority (chapter 5). The first chapter (2) deserves attention as Radosław Biskup, apart from his thorough analysis of the attempts of Kristan von Mühlhausen to open a Sambian chapter in Thuringia, presents here a different treatment of relations between the chapter and the Teutonic Order in the early stages, playing down its corporate character and underlining that from the beginning it was a foundation of the Teutonic Order, within its corporate structure, and living on its wealth. An examination of the legal structures brought i.a. the definition of the criteria and factors determining admissions to the canonic community in various periods of the time under discussion. The procedures for electing bishops were shown in detail, as were the structure of the chapter, individual prelatures and canons, the issue of the hierarchy and norms regulating the appointment to individual offices according to the German rule of annual rotation. In the section devoted to the possessions of the chapter, the author presents the development of their landed properties and their management which were undergoing major changes throughout the analysed period of 250 years.

The second part of the study is more prosopographical. It consists of two chapters (6 and 7), where the first is an attempt to reconstruct the composition of the canonical community in the period discussed (131 identified canons), while the other constitutes a biographical glossary of chapter members (including a few presumed members) created on the basis of the questionnaire incorporated in the research process.

Krzysztof Kwiatkowski (Toruń)