

ULRICH I, BISHOP OF SECKAU, AND HIS ACTIVITIES DURING THE HUNGARIAN RULE OVER THE DUCHY OF STYRIA (1254 – 1260)¹

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Abstract: PALKO, Jakub. *Ulrich I, Bishop of Seckau, and His Activities During the Hungarian Rule Over the Duchy of Styria (1254 – 1260)*. This study deals with both political and economic development of the ecclesiastical province of Seckau at the times when the Duchy of Styria was governed by officials appointed by the Kingdom of Hungary (1254 – 1260), during the times of the so-called war over the Babenberg inheritance. Based on preserved diplomatic sources from the archives of Austrian and Styrian ecclesiastical institutions predominantly, the study documents new findings on the activities of Ulrich I, the Bishop of Seckau (1243 – 1268) and later on, the Archbishop of Salzburg (1256 – 1266); which were at this period coordinated with the representatives of the Hungarian administration in Styria. Apart from addressing the issues related to the political history, the paper presents also other significant findings in respect to land tenures of both Bishopric and the Chapter of Seckau. Besides, the study analyses activities of nobles and *ministeriales* in the service of Bishop Ulrich, while emphasizing the cooperation with the Styrian administrative representatives, coming from the Hungarian milieu.

Keywords: *Ulrich I, Bishopric of Seckau, Archbishopric of Salzburg, War over the Babenberg Inheritance, Philip of Sponheim*

The Bishopric of Seckau, one of the suffragan bishoprics in the Austrian lands under the ecclesiastical province of Salzburg, played an important role in a political development of the region during the War of the Babenberg Succession (1246 – 1278). Bishop Ulrich was one of the key players in the conflict in its first stages; he was a representative of the pro-Hungarian party and later put in for a position of the Archbishop of Salzburg against Philip of Sponheim, a younger brother of Ulrich III, Duke of Carinthia and Margrave of Kranj (Žemlička 2011, 109-110).

This paper aims to outline activities of the Seckau bishopric representatives during the Hungarian rule over the Duchy of Styria (1254 – 1260) and thus point out those aspects of Hungarian-Austrian-Bohemian relations in the mid-13th century which have been constantly overlooked until now.² The study mostly focuses on the policies of Ulrich I, Bishop of Seckau (1243 – 1268); later the Archbishop of Salzburg (1257 – 1265).

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² An issue of the Hungarian administration over Styria has become more and more prominent in Slovak, Hungarian and Austrian historiography in last years. For general information see Bradács 2016, 171-197;

Ulrich was appointed the Bishop of Seckau in the early 1240s and maintained his position until his death in July 1268. His fight against Philip of Sponheim strongly influenced the whole development in the Eastern Alps area at that time; unsurprisingly, it bore a significant impact on the Hungarian rule over the Duchy of Styria as well (Freidinger 1998, p. 130-131). The analysis of charters issued by Ulrich I himself or by the Chapter of Seckau ³ reveals that during the whole period of interest, he was coordinating his activities with the representatives of the Hungarian administration at least in some manner and participated in a decision-making process of Styrian administrative authorities to some extent.

In respect to the Hungarian activities in Styria, Bishop Ulrich first appears in a charter for the Cistercian monastery in Rein, close to Graz, which had been issued by Captain Stephen Gutkeled. Actually, Ulrich maintained a prominent position within the list of those witnessing the charter, together with Ladislaus, Bishop of Knin, which attests that he must have supported the Hungarian administration in Styria from the very beginning (ReinOCist., f. Urkunden, sign. AIII/24). Besides, his policies were much aligned with those of the Hungarian administration in following years: characterized mostly by favouring ecclesiastical interests over problems of Styrian nobles and *ministeriales*. Most frequently addressed issues included property revisions as well as court and out-of-court settlements between lay and ecclesiastical nobility and *ministeriales* on one side, and ecclesiastical institutions representatives on the other side (Palko 2021, 25).

Certain continuity in Ulrich's policies once the Hungarian administration had been established, is shown in a donation charter issued as early as September 7th, 1254 in Stiefing, south of Graz. An Austrian *ministerialis* Ottokar from Graz donated villages of Wagendorf, Stangersdorf and Misselsdorf in the proximity of the Mureck Castle, south of Graz; together with a village Geidorf bei Graz (nowadays a part of the city) and his house in the outskirts of Graz to the Bishopric of Seckau. The house actually later became the seat of the Bishopric of Graz-Seckau (Zahn 1903, 225-226, n. 149). In 1254 – 1260, Ottokar appears several times on a list of witnesses, pertaining to charters issued by both Bishop Ulrich and representatives of the lay administration of the duchy.⁴

At the beginning of November 1254, Bishop Ulrich and the Bishopric of Seckau obtained the right to the income from tithes collected in Graz and a nearby village of Gradwein; this right had been earlier questioned and objected to by Gertrude of Waldstein. The cause was actually dealt with by the Holy See, with Amerlich, abbot of the above mentioned Cistercian monastery of Rein acting as a representative of the Pope. In the end, Amerlich adjudged the tithes revenues in question to Ulrich and his Bishopric of Seckau (Zahn 1903, 230-231, n. 154). While taking into consideration Amerlich's contacts with the Hungarian administration representatives, this judgement appears to be only logical and another outcome could not have been expected anyway. This seems to be rather apparent when examining following measures he was taking: in years 1254 – 1260, the Cistercian monastery in Rein recorded probably their greatest property gain, while most of these newly attributed properties were gained thanks to decisions of Gottfried of Maribor, *judex provincialis* of Styria, and at the expense of local nobles and *ministeriales*. Besides, Amerlich sometimes cooperated with other representatives of the Hungarian administration.

Herucová 2017, 3-24; Palko 2021, 3-26.

³ These particular sources are stored in Austrian archives, namely DAGS, f. Bistumsurkunden; OeStA, HHStA, f. Seckau, Augustiner-Chorherren; ReinOCist, f. Urkunden.

⁴ For example, Ottokar's property transfers in favour of the Rein monastery from July 11th, 1255 see: Zahn 1903, 261, n. 178.

These findings also suggest a certain “pro-Hungarian” orientation of Bishop Ulrich, however, this attitude fully materialized only a couple of years later when the conflict in Salzburg emerged.⁵

Other decisions related to the Rein monastery policies from 1255 attest further coordination between Ulrich and Gottfried of Maribor.⁶ On January 13th 1255, *comes curialis* Gotfried got involved in the matters of the Bishopric of Seckau again; this time together with Styrian *marschalcus* Friedrich V. of Ptuj (*marschalcus regis Vngarorum in Styria*). The bishopric was to be compensated with the sum as high as 600 silver marks. The damage to the bishopric was inflicted by a *ministerialis* Herrand of Wildon (Fröhlich 1756, 215, n. 67).

Both chapter and bishopric in Seckau naturally did not get their income only from won legal proceedings, but also via various other activities as for instance rental of bishopric and chapter properties. There is an interesting example of such activities in 1256, when Arnold, provost of Seckau leased two whole homesteads and 13 fields in the village of Hetzendorf, north of Judenburg to Friedrich, a burgher of Judenburg and his sons Perchte and Otto. In return, the burghers pledged to pay the Seckau chapter half a mark of silver annually, always by the September 29th at latest (Zahn 1903, 294-295, n. 208). There is a similar example of a pledge by a certain Richza Ebermut from August of the following year. Her liege lords, brothers Wülfig and Hartnid of Leibnitz arranged an agreement between her and the Seckau chapter, stating that after Richza's death, the Church of Seckau was entitled to get her vineyards in Kainberg (*Jæringen*), together with all the rights pertaining to the future occupancy and yields of these vineyards (Zahn 1903, 324, n. 235; Fröhlich 1756, 216, n. 69).

Formally, Bishop Ulrich's influence grew in 1256, when he was elected the Archbishop of Salzburg by the representatives of the Chapter of Salzburg. This development was a consequence of the almost decade lasting tenure of Philip of Sponheim who was only an “elected” Archbishop of Salzburg (*archielectus*). His activities were opposed by the local chapter as well as the representatives of the Hungarian administration in the Duchy of Styria; the Holy See also did not stay completely out of these disputes. However, Philip refused to step down which triggered a feud between him and the newly-elected Archbishop Ulrich; these arguments later resulted in several armed conflicts, also with some Bohemian (Přemyslids), Carinthian (Sponheims) and Hungarian (Árpáds) involvement.⁷ One of the Austrian monastery annalists described those times as follows: when “*the canons of Salzburg rose against master Phillip, the elect of that very church, a son of the duke of Carinthia, they demanded (the appointment of) Ulrich, Bishop of Seckau*”⁸. However, since the city of Salzburg as the main seat of the archbishopric was held by loyal nobles and *ministeriales* of Philip of Sponheim, Ulrich's position was rather formal and fairly limited during his whole tenure. Besides, some of the high-ranking dignitaries could not accept even the mere election of Ulrich, as he maintained his previous position at the Bishopric of Seckau which was in contradiction with the cannon law (Žemlička 2011, 109-110).

⁵ On the Rein monastery possessions development see the latest contribution by Palko 2021, 13-17.

⁶ For instance, granting the indulgences to the Rein Chapel of All Saints from January 17th, 1255 (ReinOCist., f. Urkunden, sign. AIII/27), or granting the monastery statute by Gotfried of Maribor only a couple of days earlier. (ReinOCist., f. Urkunden, sign. AIII/25-26).

⁷ There has not been a complex work addressing the conflict over the Archbishopric of Salzburg in 1246/1256 – 1266 yet. However, the whole issue has been addressed partially, by various Austrian, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian authors, see for instance Antonín 2010, 55-71; Herucová 2017, 8-9; Pferschy 1978/1979, 73-91; Roháč 2016, 18-42; Žemlička 2011, 109-110.

⁸ „[...] *Canonici Salzpurgenses opposuerunt se domino Philippo electo eiusdem ecclesie, filio ducis Karinthie, et dominum Ulricum Sekowensem episcopum postularerunt, <quem dominus papa quartus, domino Philippo deposito, consecravit.> [...].*“ Continuatio Sancrucensis 2, MGH SS 9, 644.

Through the mediation of Bishop Heinrich of Chiemsee, one of Philip's formal subordinates, Pope Alexander IV attempted to reconcile the feuding parties. His call to Heinrich argues for Philip's deposition; in conclusion of this appeal, he called upon the Salzburg archbishopric representatives to respect their newly elected Archbishop Ulrich.⁹ Thus, the Archbishopric of Salzburg found itself ruled by two sovereigns: deposed Philip of Sponheim; who, however, thanks to his contacts controlled the majority of the land; and formally acknowledged Ulrich whose competences and influence were very limited.

As far as the Seckau bishopric was concerned, Ulrich's relations with the Styrian administration remained unchanged after the Salzburg election in 1256. In this respect, Ulrich is first mentioned as the Archbishop of Salzburg on November 29th 1257. The document reveals that at that time, Ulrich was still trying to grasp his new position better and establish himself more significantly within borders of the ecclesiastical province of Salzburg. While trying to do so, he established contacts with representatives of more remote parts of the archbishopric (Freising B, f. Bistum und Hochstift, sign. 1257-XI-29). In later diplomatic conflicts with Philip of Sponheim, and Bohemian and Austrian ruler Přemysl Ottokar II, good relations with Conrad I. of Tölz and Hohenburg, Bishop of Freising, as well as with his successor Conrad II of Dhaun, turned out to be rather useful. The cooperation with Freising continued also in the years to follow: for instance in early 1258, the Chapter of Freising suggested to Ulrich to appoint Master Heinrich of Sankt Andrä a scribe at the Sankt Peter am Kammersberg monastery. This proposal was later approved by Ulrich (Freising B, f. Bistum und Hochstift, sign. 1258-00-00/1).

As an archbishop, Ulrich started rewarding his loyal people in Styria which might have aimed at gaining more local supporters against Philip of Sponheim. However, in contrast to Philip who preferred concluding various disadvantageous agreements, not rarely under certain pressure, Ulrich opted for a different approach.¹⁰ He favoured predominantly those nobles and *ministeriales* who had been loyal to the previous archbishop, Eberhard II of Regensburg (until 1246) and subsequently had not entered Philip's services. For instance, he granted the right to revenues from the tithes collected in Hartberg, north-east of Graz, to Liutold of Stattegg and his wife Anne on September 5th, 1258 (OeStA, HHStA, f. Salzburg, Erzstift, sign. AUR-1258-IX-05).

In late December 1258, Ulrich addressed a complaint of Wülfig of Hanau concerning incomes from the village of Hirscheegg, west of Graz (Zahn 1903, 339-340, n. 251). On January 19th, 1259 Ulrich approved hereditary rights to collect further unspecified tithes to Volkmar, Valchun and Walter, burghers of Graz, (OeStA, HHStA, f. Salzburg, Erzstift, sign. AUR-1259-I-19). Moreover, in April, he granted the above mentioned Volkmar and his heirs the right to collect tithes in Gleisdorf and Fladnitz (OeStA, HHStA, f. Salzburg, Erzstift, sign. AUR-1259-IV-17).

⁹ „[...] *In contemptum veniens Phylippus quondam Salzburgensis ecclesie electus, nimis videtur a se timorem Domini et hominum reverentiam abieciisse, dum adhuc munitiones et castra et quedam aliam bona ipsius ecclesie in sua detinet potestate, quasi non suffecerit, dictam tenuisse ecclesiam in suam et multorum perniciem tanto tempore viduatam. [...] Errata igitur dicti Phylippi corrigi misericorditer cupientes, fraternitati tue per apostolica scripta mandamus, quatenus ipsum ex parte venerabili fratri nostro [Ulrico] Salzpurgensi archiepiscopo vel alii eius nomine sine qualibet difficultate resignet*“. In full extent included in: Hermanni Altahensis annales, MGH SS 17, 398.

¹⁰ These are actually tens of contracts concluded in 1248 – 1256 between Philip of Sponheim, and Austrian and Styrian nobles and *ministeriales* which made them obliged to support Philip and supply him with a specifically defined number of troops. Besides, sums of various amount were unjustly levied as well. See for instance the contract with Ulrich of Liechtenstein. OeStA, HHStA, f. Salzburg, Domkapitel, sign. AUR-1250-V-12/1; or with brothers Rudolfo, Cholo and Reimbert from Sankt Jakob bei Rosental in Carinthia: AES, f. Urkunden, sign. 2 327 and many others.

Similar records referring to various issues point to the actual extent of Archbishop Ulrich's power: on the basis of comparative research from the last decade, it may be concluded that his activities impacted a geographically very similar area to the one controlled by the Hungarian administration. More specifically, this included the area of Central and Southern Styria, with the greatest volume of accounts originating from the centre of the duchy (Graz and pertaining area) as well as the area of the Seckau ecclesiastical province (Dopsch et al. 2003, 453; Palko 2021, 6).

From the early 1259, Ulrich started escalating his activities and these were even more aligned with representatives of the completely replaced administrative apparatus, now headed by Duke Stephen, son of the Hungarian King Béla IV who had taken over Styria in 1258, once Stephen Gutkeled had been expelled. The uprising against Gutkeled was actually led by his own *marschalculus*, the above mentioned Friedrich V of Ptuj. As a consequence of this rebellion, most of Hungarian garrisons were pushed out of Styria (Palko 2021, 15).

At that point, King Béla IV intervened and appointed his eldest son Stephen (future Stephen V) the Duke of Styria. Stephen had previously held the titles of Duke of Croatia and Slavonia (Makk 1994, 294) and Duke of Transylvania (Sălăgean 2005, 234). Logically, Stephen first came to Ptuj, a centre of the Styrian rebellion. The city surrendered and subsequently became for a couple of years one of the most prominent points of Hungarian power in the region. Even after the battle of Kressenbrunn in summer 1260, the Hungarian garrison maintained their control over Ptuj and was obliged to leave only according to the peace treaty concluded in Vienna in March 1261 (Žemlička 1986, 115).

Duke Stephen probably assumed that he might strengthen his influence in the region by backing Archbishop Ulrich in his fight against Philip of Sponheim. To hold the city of Salzburg turned out to be the key element in this respect. Archbishop Ulrich had been supporting the Hungarians for a couple of years already; however, the first direct and unquestionable accounts on their mutual cooperation appear only as late as 1258. The main goal was to take control over other towns and castles. However, after some successes at the beginning, their army was defeated by the town of Radstadt by Ulrich III, Duke of Carinthia and Margrave of Kranj, the brother of the deposed Philip of Sponheim. It is rather probable that Philip himself took part in the battle; thanks to various contracts with Austrian and Styrian nobles and *ministeriales*, he was actually able to provide an army counting several thousands of soldiers. Since many people in Styria still opposed the Hungarian rule, it may have significantly contributed to Stephen's and Ulrich's defeat. (Hoensch 1989, 112).¹¹

The defeat at Radstadt signifies the beginning of the end of the Hungarian rule in Styria. Stephen was able to maintain his position for more than a year, while keeping the cooperation with Archbishop Ulrich going. However, the war in 1258 disrupted a fragile stability in the relations between the Hungarians (represented by King Béla IV and Duke Stephen) and Bohemians, as Carinthia was an important ally of Přemysl Ottokar II in first phases of the War of the Babenberg Succession.

Disagreements between Stephen and Duke Ulrich III escalated the following year when Stephen, aided by the Cumans, plundered Carinthia (Annales Otakarini, MGH SS 9, 183). Béla IV's relations with the Cumans had been problematic up to 1254 when the king married his older son Stephen to a daughter of one of the Cuman chieftains. Subsequently, she was baptized

¹¹ The Salzburg annalist refers to a tight grip of Ulrich's army, while emphasising the advantage of surprise. This resulted in many casualties and injuries: „[...] *Postmodum assumptis pluribus armatis versus civitatem Salzburg iter arripuit, et dum Rastat venisset, dux Ulricus Karinthie eum clam a tergo cum militia insewuitur, volens ipsi nocere; ubi in crepusculo fuit a partibus utriusque graviter dimicatur, aliquantis ex utraque parte vulneratis et occisis.* [...]“ Annales sancti Rudberti Salisburgenses, MGH SS 9, 794.

Elisabeth and the Cumans became relatively well-incorporated in the Hungarian army, aiding it also in major battles in the War of the Babenberg Succession (Kressenbrunn, Rába, Dürnkurt) (Huszti 1938, 745).

When Stephen (V) became the Duke of Styria in late 1258, Archbishop Ulrich became doubtlessly more active. Previous period of his passivity may have been ascribed to a brief imprisonment after Philip of Sponheim had taken him captive after the battle at Radstadt (Dopsch et al. 1983, 440-441). Once he was released, there was an apparent coordination between his and Stephen's activities, especially in terms of policies related to Styrian monasteries.

One of the examples backing this thesis is a charter for the Cistercian monastery Rein from May 26th, 1259, issued by Duke Stephen, confirming the monastery their privileges, incomes and properties. In addition, Stephen declared the monastery being under his protection. Among various distinctive personalities, mainly coming from the Kingdom of Hungary, Archbishop Ulrich was one of the guarantors of this legal act (ReinOCist, f. Urkunden, sign. AUR-AIII/41). An initial impulse had actually come from Pope Alexander IV as early as November 1258; he appealed to Béla IV to put an end to exploitation of monasteries by lay nobles and *ministeriales*. He also specified the meaning of this exploitation by some examples: e. g. when monks were forced to participate in castle constructions and destruction or other illegal practices (ReinOCist, f. Urkunden, sign. AUR-AIII/38). In early May 1259, Archbishop Ulrich himself pledged to protect this monastery (ReinOCist, f. Urkunden, sign. AUR-AIII/40).

From this time onwards, Ulrich appeared as a witness to several charters issued by the Hungarian lords of Styria.¹² Once the Hungarians were pushed out of the Austrian lands for good and defeated at Kressenbrunn in summer 1260, Ulrich remained active, but naturally, no longer in any coordination with the Hungarians: or at least, the sources do not reveal such information. In the first half of 1260, when Duke Stephen's government was collapsing definitely, he issued several charters in favour of the Order of Teutonic Knights (DOZA, f. Urkunden, sign. 551), Chapter of Seckau (Zahn 1903, 381-382, n. 288), or the already mentioned Rein monastery (ReinOCist, f. Urkunden, sign. AUR-AIII/47).

Once the Hungarian army had been defeated at Kressenbrunn in summer 1260, the Hungarians no longer intervened in Styrian matters. Thus Archbishop Ulrich also lost any kind of support from their side. His fight against Philip of Sponheim continued; however, none of them turned out to be able to achieve general recognition or solidify their position in some decisive manner.

Conclusion

The activities of Ulrich, Bishop of Seckau, significantly influenced the political situation in Central Europe at the times of Hungarian rule over the Duchy of Styria (1254 – 1260). Diplomatic sources preserved and stored in archives of Austrian and namely Styrian ecclesiastical institutions enabled to document and describe Ulrich's political activities. During this period, Ulrich mostly coordinated his policies with the representatives of the Hungarian administration in Styria. Apart from his active political involvement, the research aimed to document his economic activities, namely those related to the properties of the Seckau bishopric in the late 1250s, when Styrian monasteries and Chapter of Seckau were granted new properties. His involvement in the conflict over the Salzburg archbishopric (1246 – 1266) and his fight against Philip of Sponheim,

¹² For example, in one of the rulings of the Styrian diet from mid-1259 (Zahn 1903, 364-365, n. 274); or rulings for the monastery in Judenburg (Zahn 1903, 366, n. 275); in Spital am Semmering (Zahn 1903, 363-364, 273) and others.

Archbishop-elect of Salzburg and brother of Ulrich III, Duke of Carinthia and Margrave of Kranj, is of particular importance. Once the Hungarian administration in Styria collapsed at the end of the 1250s, the sources do not provide any accounts on contacts between Bishop Ulrich and the Hungarians.

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