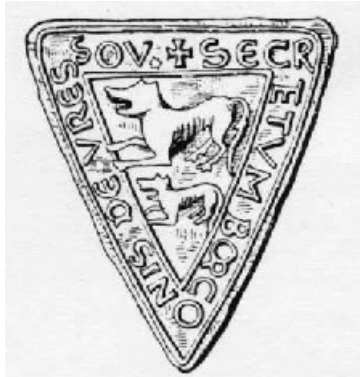


The family von Borcke

Dr. Wulf-Dietrich v. Borcke



Borko II. Burgraf von Colberg. 1282.

The history of the towns Labes, Regenwalde and Wangerin is closely connected with the Borcke families. All three towns are foundations of the family. As lords of the manor they influenced their fate over centuries. For a long time one has tried to put the beginning of the family history to the early Middle Ages. But in 1745 a document dated 1186/87 came to light, which clarified the matter. In this account one "Pribislaus Filius Borkonis" (Pribislaus, the son of Borko) is presented as a witness. Unfortunately we do not learn more about him and his father Borko (I). Borko (I) is today considered to be the ancestor of the family. Most probably he as well as his sons were old-established noblemen of Wendish descent in the service of the Pomeranian Dukes. Only with Borko (II), who is mentioned as a witness in a document by Duke Wartislaw III, does the family-tree become continual.

The names of his sons Johannes (II) and Jacobus (I) appear 1282 and Nikolaus (I) 1283 for the first time. Nikolaus is the first to use his father's name as the family name, calling himself N. Borko in 1297. Today the family consists of two branches: Ancestor of the first branch is Johannes II, filius Borke (died 1282/83), and the second branch starts with Nikolaus I, dictus Borko, (died 1288/94) miles (1302).

We get to know Borko (I) from further documents as castellan or lord of castle Kolberg. Since 1251 he took part in state occasions. When in 1255 Kolberg was bestowed the Lübeck town charter and the Wendish castellan constitution were abolished and he gave up his position as a lord of the castle. From then on he and his sons do not seem to have taken on any further duties in the Kolberg district. Looking for a new field of activities, he found it in the southern less developed parts of Pomerania, where the Markgrafen of Brandenburg tried to force their way in to take possession of the conquered land. From the Pomeranian point of view this had to be stopped. The best protection in those days was to build castles and found settlements.

Equipped by the Dukes with vast properties and manorial rights in the region of the upper river Rega, Borko (II) built for himself and his three sons the castles Labes, Stramehl (Wulvesberg) and Regenwalde. He settled farmers, who were willing to clear the woodlands for cultivation. Protected by the castles German crafts- and tradesmen developed the settlements into market places, which in the end received town charters and civic rights. From 1273 Borko (II) called himself Lord of Labes (dominus de Lobis). In the first half of the 14th century a young branch of the Labes main family founded Wangerin as their residence. As vassal of the Duke of Pomerania, Borko (II), who is often mentioned in the documents as a trusted advisor of the sovereign, created together with his son through their energy and prudence the basis for the later extensive family property in the upper valley of the Rega.

Later generations have extended their property beyond the area. Therefore we find family members with considerable properties near Stargard (Pansin with surrounding villages), in West-Pomerania (south of Anklam) in Mark Brandenburg (the town Falkenberg and district), in East-Prussia (former Duchy of Prussia) at the Lower Rhine and in Saxony.

In the 14th century the Dukes of Pomerania granted our family together with a few other families certain privileges in preference to other nobles. This small circle including the Borcke family became the so called "Burg- and Schloßgesessenen".

After 1637 the Pomeranian dynasty became extinct and after the end of the 30-year war, Sweden received West-Pomerania with the Isle of Rügen, Stettin and an area east of the river Oder. Brandenburg received East-Pomerania and the diocese Kamen.

Soon the Borckes put themselves at the disposal of the new sovereign to serve in the army and administration and obtained high positions in the Prussian Kingdom. One of them was the Generalfeldmarschall Adrian Bernhard Graf von Borcke (1688-1741), who between 1717 and 1720 built Schloß Stagordt, the arguably most beautiful Baroque palace in East-Pomerania, which was destroyed at the end of World War II. As a wise friend of science and the arts, the Prussian minister Casper Wilhelm von Borcke (1704-1747) has left an everlasting memorial to himself with his translations and historical work.

During the course of history other members of the von Borcke family carried out important sometimes also honorary duties at court as in wars under their sovereigns' governments of Pomerania, Brandenburg, Sweden, Saxony and Prussia. As vassals, knights or advisors, as governors, officers, ministers and civil servants many reached high positions and honours, serving as examples to generations to come. In the USA is Heros v. Borcke, 1835 – 1895 still very much known. He served from 1862 – 1866 as an Inspector General in the Cavalry Corp of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Until 1945 a great number of the family in West- and East-Pomerania still possessed and managed their ancestral properties. In 1945 they were all to be lost. Today most members of the family live in Germany and USA.

