

ALBERT VON SEEBERG

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The family connections between the Přemyslids and the German princely houses also had political effects. The close relations of the Přemyslids in particular with the lands lying north of Bohemia brought about not only a strong bourgeois and peasant migration to Bohemia but also the immigration of aristocratic families. Among these, Albert von Seeberg holds an especially prominent position. He descended from the family of the burgraves of Leisnig, one of the most powerful and distinguished aristocratic families of the Mark of Meissen, which was probably of Franco-German origin.

In the sequence of witnesses to contracts he is repeatedly placed under or next to the highest dignitaries of the land, and he had close relations with the Witigones, the lords of Dauba and Leipa, the Riesenburgers, the Schönburgers, and others. Albert's mother probably descended from the house of Dauba. The first documentary mention of him was in the year 1277. He soon succeeded in acquiring, in addition to the property which he held in his old Meissen homeland, extensive property holdings in Bohemia. The ancestral castle of Seeberg, which he probably built and after which he named himself, is situated on the slope of the Erzgebirge, on the edge of the fertile Biela gau and was probably the center of his northwest Bohemian properties. Already for 1290 there is evidence that the town and castle of Bilin, as well as villages in the Brüx and Saaz region, were in his hand. From 1277 to 1292 Albert was also burgrave of Kaaden. Temporarily the Seeberger established a footing in the Elbogen district. The Tachau Land represented a further important base of Albert in Bohemia.

He came to Bohemia at a time when the settlement of the land was still in progress, and he took an active part in this settlement, thus following the example of his ancestors. Castle-building, the laying out of villages and probably also the development of the town of Tachau can be traced back to him. In so doing he was, in keeping with the spirit of his time, far from pursuing national goals. The bearers of the mediaeval Eastern colonization thought in supranational terms, just as the Empire and the then extremely influential Church were supranational. Nevertheless, the result of this settlement of the land was an extension of the area of German settlement.

Albert identified himself wholly with the higher nobility of his new homeland, and took part in its efforts in the sphere of power politics, even when at the beginning of the Luxembourg period these were clearly aimed at the Germans who had come into the land.

Into his old age Albert remained a fighter by nature; he died in 1321. He took part in rebellious activity against three of the six kings whom he experienced, in the foreground of political life. The alleged encroachment of his right let him rebel against Otokar II and Wenceslas II, the attainment of increased power of the Estates, against King John and his wife.