

und Henrich auch innerhalb des gesamten schwedischen Machtbereichs aus. Sie machten damals Geschäfte im großen Stil – ohne das Geld der Rígenser rückten die Heere der schwedischen Könige nicht von der Stelle.

SUMMARY

*The Dynasty of the Wulff Mint
Masters from Riga (1557–1659)*

This article summarises the biographical data available on mint masters from the Wulff family in Riga (1557–1659): Martin Wulff I, Henrich Wulff I, Martin Wulff II, and Henrich Wulff II (Wulffenschild). The Wulff family was the longest active mint master dynasty in Riga and Livonia, their careers spanning three generations through political and military turbulent times in Livonian history. The coins minted by the Wulff family are well studied, yet their activity in the mint and biographical data on them is rarely studied systematically. Based on the sources of the National Archives of Latvia and the State Archive of Sweden and available literature, this paper aims to summarise the available information on the biographies of Wulff mint masters. Some of the main aspects covered are the terms on which the mint masters were hired, their affiliation to the goldsmith guild, the economic conditions of the family, their relations to the city magistrate and other duties in and outside the mint.

As the life-stories of the Wulff mint masters show, Livonian mint masters didn't necessarily belong to the goldsmith guild. Belonging to a mint master's family as well as political patronage were arguably more important for securing the position. Most of the Wulff family were educated in the crafts under the supervision of their fathers. Besides the duties in the mint, they were also active in goldsmith craft from time to time.

Wulff mint masters rented the mint from Riga magistrate and were responsible for its upkeep and quality of the coins. In turn, they were exempt of the obligations of ordinary citizens. During the period of high silver prices in the late 16th to early 17th century, Henrich Wulff I (1588–1614/15) borrowed money from the city, for which he had to pledge his private precious metal collection. It proves that the position of a mint master came with not only high responsibility and profit opportunities, but high risks as well.

Managing the mint required political backing and diplomatic skills. It was most vividly manifested in the career of mint master Martin Wulff II (1615–1633). Despite the prohibition of minting local coins during 1626–1629, Martin continued minting Riga schillings from till 1628. At the same time, he imported Swedish copper coins to Riga. From 1630 to 1633,

Martin Wulff II took a politically and economically significant position as factor of the Swedish king in Livonia. His duties were to keep the records of the incoming finances in the Riga Chamber of finances and managing the provisions of the Swedish army in Livonia and Prussia.

To conclude, the history of the Wulff family is inseparable from the history of the Riga mint. On the other hand, their story portrays the rise of a family that succeeded in accumulating privileges, wealth and political ties, allowing to distinguish them among the members of highest strata in the Livonian society.