MEDIEVAL POLAND

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AMBIGUITIES OF THE FRONTIER: TWO CASE STUDIES FROM MEDIEVAL SILESIA*

In early March of 1226, Pope Honorius III sent a letter delegating three prelates to resolve a dispute between Duke Henry the Bearded of Silesia and Bishop Lawrence of Wrocław, a diocese encompassing that duchy. The prelates were all based in Meißen – the diocese, and marcher county, situated immediately to the west of Silesia. Two were Cistercian abbots, the third dean of the Meißen cathedral. The complainant was the duke. The crux of the complaint was the change in the assessment of tithes owed by the inhabitants of Silesia, implemented by Bishop Lawrence over the preceding ten years. A year later, the judges’ delegate issued a substantial record of a compromise settlement to this dispute.2

Duke Henry’s complaint concerned three issues. First, “under the name of tithes,” the bishop was seeking “exactions contrary to the custom of the land observed by the neighboring bishops” – that is to say, breaking a locally legi-

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2. S.U., 1: no. 281 (1227), 207.

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