

**MSC 2020****International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.  
COMMUNICATION»****PARTNERSHIP. INTEGRATION. INCORPORATION. TO THE  
QUESTION OF LIVONIA AND LITHUANIA ECONOMIC  
RELATIONS**

Daniil Bessudnov (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University, Veliky Novgorod, Russian Federation  
D.bessudnov@mail.ru**Abstract**

The struggle for control over the Baltic Sea, which flared up in the 16th century, left a contradictory trace in the history of the Baltic states. On the one hand, it launched the processes of the formation of new state models, and on the other hand, the decline to an internal crisis and the decline of states, one of which was the so-called Old Livonia. In addition to Russia, Sweden and Denmark, the Polish-Lithuanian state, which had a long and rich history of relations with the Livonian Confederation, took a special part in the division of the Livonian heritage. The Lithuanian and Polish markets organically supplemented the Baltic transit trade, acting as a raw material supplier in exchange for access to imported goods from other countries. The desire to secure the best sales conditions for ourselves, as well as the desire to establish control over trade with hostile Russia, de facto lead to the introduction of the Livonian lands into the sphere of influence of the Polish-Lithuanian sovereigns and a safe economic merger, which took place even before the start of the Livonian War. The economic relations of Livonia and Poland-Lithuania have a noticeable impact on the development of economic relations of foreign policy, which adopted integration, coupled with the above offensive at the local level, which led to the inclusion of the lands of the Livonian Order in the Jagiellonian possessions.

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## **1. Introduction**

When it comes to the state and development of the Lithuanian economy at the turn of the Middle Ages and the early Modern Age, most often researchers pay attention to its agriculture sector. There are some interesting publications on the economic activities of Kaunas and Vilnius, the number of which has recently increased due to the efforts of archaeologists. A special topic is the production and trade activities of Smolensk, Vitebsk and Polotsk, Russian cities within Lithuania. However, the completeness of studies on Lithuania's foreign trade relations cannot be clearly determined, since at present there are no fundamental, generalizing studies of this kind of problems. This seems strange, since due to the location of Lithuania between Catholic Europe and Russian lands with access to the Baltic regions, where the Hansa dominated, and in the Black Sea region, foreign trade was of great importance for it as a factor determining its socio-economic, political and cultural development. Moreover, Lithuania's foreign economic relations are one of the significant elements of the historical context, which is important for considering subsequent events related to the history of the Livonian War of 1558–1583.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The focus of this study is the process of gradual incorporation of trade with Livonia into the economic structure of the Polish-Lithuanian state, in particular, the transformation of Lithuania into the hinterland of Riga with the subsequent incorporation of this large economic center in the Polish-Lithuanian state (later the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). Mutual economic interests and economic integration of Livonia and Lithuania contributed to the resolution of disputes over the Lithuanian-Livonian borders and created prospects for the subsequent expansion of the Jagiellonian state in the Baltic region. Moreover, the ancient right of patronage (protectorate) of the Polish kings and the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, which was actively used in the 16th century, performed the role of the justification for expansion in relation to Riga diocese.

## **3. Research Questions**

This article presents the economic interests of the Polish-Lithuanian state in the Baltic region, which had a significant impact on both its economic structure and the prospects for its political development.

The prospect of control over an economically and strategically important region, such as Livonia, attracted many neighboring states, despite the fact that for Catholic European countries the direct expansion was impossible until the Reformation due to the special status of the Livonian Confederation states as “crusader” ones under direct control of papacy and empire (Murray, 2018). The special status of Livonia contributed to containing military expansion, but did not have the desired effect against Lithuania's invasion of the Livonian economy, as well as against local border conflicts that were the result of Lithuania's claims to the Livonian borderlands and were eliminated only with the incorporation of Livonia into the Polish-Lithuanian states.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

This study provides evidence of sources that allow us to assess the general state and development tendencies of trade relations between Lithuania and Livonia. It also considers their role in political integration processes that led to the incorporation of South Livonia and Riga (Inflanty) in the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland at the initial stage of the Livonian War.

#### **5. Research Methods**

Along with modern publications, the study used unknown and little-known archival materials that can expand the view over the state of Livonian-Lithuanian trade relations in the 16th century and their connection with the Jagiellonian political strategy concerning the Baltic region. Of great interest are documents from the personal archive of the Prussian Duke Albrecht (Herzogbriefarchiv) from the Königsberg archive, which now takes place in the Secret State Archives of Prussian Cultural Heritage in Berlin. The Duke was one of the main initiators of the incorporation of Livonia into the Polish-Lithuanian state and his archive contains extensive personal, diplomatic correspondence and copies of treaties, as well as many interesting details regarding Polish-Lithuanian-Livonian relations on the eve of Livonia's incorporation into the Polish-Lithuanian state.

#### **6. Findings**

In the 16th century, Lithuania's foreign economic relations were realized at several fronts: the southern part focused on Danzig (Gdansk) and Königsberg, while Zemaitija and Zanimanje – on Riga (mainly through the port of Klaipėda). The Baltic focus of Lithuanian foreign trade led to the development of its economic relations with Poland, which joined in the 15th century Pomerelia and Danzig and subjected Prussia in 1525; as well as with Livonia, which provided it with an access to Riga. The scope of Lithuanian trade activity in both directions fluctuated, but generally remained equal in proportion and retained impressive volume (Kirchner, 1970; Polekhov, 2015). Compared to Lithuania, Poland's trade with Livonia was not so active since for Polish entrepreneurship the Hanseatic Danzig was the main trade center in the Baltic, to which Königsberg joined after 1525. Lithuanian relations with Livonia had ancient roots, since Lithuanian merchants actively traded in Riga as early as the 13th century, and at the beginning of the New Age, as Zanimanje turned into a hinterland of Riga, which supplied export products of agriculture and forestry, their links became even stronger (Elliott, 2000; Jēkabsons, 2016).

The main trade route connecting Lithuania with Livonia was the Daugava (Western Dvina; German: Düna), which connected the trading cities, such as Vilna, Kaunas, Polotsk with Riga by a single communication system (Kiaupa, 1999). The development of Lithuanian-Livonian trade relations, which took place at the beginning of the 16th century, and the extension of the range of Lithuanian exports contributed to the emergence of commercial network in Lithuania with places such as Rokiskis, Pandėlys, Šeduva, Biržai, Kedainiai, Kupiskis, Svedasai, Zagare, Ukmergė, Anykščiai and Vabalninkas. The range of products supplied by Lithuania was formed in the 14th century and remained the same in later times – wax, leather, hides and goods made of them, hemp, wood and lumber; Lithuanian merchants got in

exchange fabrics, salt, fish, metals, luxury goods and modern weapons imported into Livonia by the Hansa. At the beginning of the 16th century, the range of Lithuanian products became more diverse due to the large amount of grain, flax, hemp and other types of agricultural raw materials. At the same time, the volumes of traditional exports increased and their quality characteristics improved (Doroshenko, 1963; Gudavičius, 2005; Uvarov, 2012), that, in particular, had a positive effect on the increase in volumes export of agricultural products from the port of Danzig (Link, 2016).

The topic of economic interaction between Lithuania and Livonia was quite often mentioned in the Livonian-Lithuanian state, diplomatic acts and in other types of documents. The clauses concerning Livonian-Lithuanian trade are present in the text of the Peace of Thorn of the Polish-Lithuanian state with the Teutonic Order in 1411 (CDPL, 1764), in the Treaty of Melno in 1422 (CDPL, 1764), which provided Lithuanian merchants with free trade and direct access to The Baltic Sea through Palanga; in the famous Treaty of Pozvol of 1557 (HBA, n.d.. l), which, among other things, proclaimed the exemption of Lithuanian and Polish merchants from all duties and taxes “both in Riga and other places [Livonia]”, and in a number of others documents (HBA, n.d. u; Dzyarnovich, 2003; Kłodziński, 1908; LECUB, 1884; LECUB, 1889; Neitmann, 1986). The intensity and significance of trade relations between Lithuania and Livonia is also evidenced by the use of the Livonian shilling as a Lithuanian means of payment in the 14th century, which was in circulation inside the principality (Dzyarnovich, 2003). The coin was so popular that massive counterfeiting took place most widespread in Polotsk (Ryabtsevich, 1977). There is also the indicative clause of the Livonian-Lithuanian treaties, according to which Livonia’s trade with Lithuania should not have been stopped in the event of war (LECUB, 1889; RLA, n.d.). A large amount of information about the state of Livonian-Lithuanian trade is also presented in the personal archive of the Prussian Duke Albrecht – it contains documents concerning the trade of Riga and its diocese (HBA, n.d. c; HBA, n.d. d; HBA, n.d. f; HBA, n.d. g; HBA, n.d. j; HBA, n.d. i; HBA, n.d. p; HBA, n.d. p), trade relations with Lithuania (HBA, n.d. g; HBA, n.d. l; HBA, n.d. s; HBA, n.d. t; HBA, n.d. u) and with Russian merchants (HBA, n.d. m; HBA, n.d. n; HBA, n.d. o; HBA, n.d. p; HBA, n.d. q; HBA, n.d. v; HBA, n.d. w).

The focus on the Baltic market significantly influenced the economic development of Lithuania. The tangible benefit from the trade of the products made at the estates led at the end of the 15th century to a noticeable increase in the number of gentry and magnates involved in foreign trade, both directly and through trade agents (Uvarov, 2012). This predetermined the rapid transformation of local estate into folwark oriented to the foreign market (Yakubsky, 1975). The folwark type of farming and the expansion of estate privileges favored the further development of trade in agricultural products and a stable increase in export volumes through Danzig. If in 1491–1492, the export of grain through Danzig was only 5.5 thousand last (last is a measure of ship cargo, approximately equal to 2 tons), then by 1537, the export had almost doubled, reaching 10 thousand last. In the second half of the 16th century, the upward trend in grain sales continued (66 thousand last in 1563) and reached its peak in 1618, when exports totaled 118 thousand last (Davies, 2005). The Lithuanian-Polish noblemen quickly became involved in trade relations in the Baltic region, because it was facilitated by the acquisition in the first half of the 16th century of the right to export their own grain and other goods, as well as to import free of duties and taxes (Kahk & Tarvel, 1997). The formation of folwark-estates is a vivid example of the influence of the Baltic market needs on the domestic policy of both Lithuania and Poland. However, the growth of export did not affect the very

principle of conducting trade transactions. The fact is that visiting merchants were obliged to sell their goods only through Livonian merchants (Dzyarnovich, 2003), that, according to the market rules, forced them to reduce the initial price in the interests of maintaining competitiveness, although a buyer lost part of the profit that was received by a trade agent.

Since the parties had such close and long-term trade contacts, such a procedure for selling goods could not satisfy the Lithuanian party, but it was difficult to change it. First of all, the Livonian Order, which de facto represented state power in Livonia, was interested in this. The Order's farmlands existed, for the most part, due to the production and sale of the same grain and timber through the Hanseatic ports (Kreem, 2006), so excessive indulgences in the Lithuanian-Livonian trade could strengthen the competitor by expanding volumes of Lithuanian trade and thereby undermine the economic position of the Order. Moreover, even Livonian estates were agree with the Order, because many of them enriched themselves through transit trade. However, the numerous internal contradictions of Livonia, the most striking of which was the conflict between the Order, Archbishop Wilhelm of Riga and the Livonian estates, aggravated by the start of the Reformation, became fertile ground for the development of Lithuanian-Livonian trade relations and further economic integration of Livonia into the Polish-Lithuanian state.

The case of the closed Lithuanian road became an indicative event, which reflected the desire of Archbishop Wilhelm to establish closer communication with Lithuania, as opposed to the Order. The first mention of it can be found in the personal archives of Duke Albrecht in the petition of Archbishop Wilhelm to the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Sigismund II Augustus from 1551 regarding the road from Livonia to Lithuania (HBA, n.d. a). The existing and permitted at that time road was opened during the period of many years of confrontation between the Order, Riga and its episcopate in the 15th century, "at the beginning of the Riga uprising for its benefit and in prejudice of the archbishopric". This route passed through the lands controlled by the Livonian Order and was hardly connected with the lands of the diocese. Because of this fact, Wilhelm repeatedly appealed to Sigismund with a request to close the existing road and reopen the closed old road that runs through the lands of the Archbishop (and not the Order) directly to Lithuania (HBA, n.d. b; HBA, n.d. e; HBA, n.d. i). Sigismund II Augustus reacted to the requests of the archbishop favorably, providing assistance and addressing this case in the Saeima convened on October 28, 1551 (HBA, n.d. b; HBA, n.d. c; HBA, n.d. e). As well as Sigismund, the prominent Lithuanian politician Mikolaj "the Black" Radziwill (HBA, n.d. h), who later became one of the main initiators of the incorporation of Livonia, was also interested in opening the forbidden Lithuanian road. However, unfortunately for Wilhelm, the overwhelming majority of the Lithuanian noblemen did not appreciate the prospects of the development of the Livonian campaign, since they were more interested in their own rights and privileges, especially because the planned redrawing of communication routes with Livonia would inevitably worsen relations with the Order and Riga.

It is important to note that the economic interests of Lithuania were not only in striving to secure the best sales conditions for itself. A major task was also to establish control over the trade with the Moscow state, which was one of the most important routes of transit trade through Livonia. The early history of Livonian-Russian trade relations in some aspects can be associated with Livonian-Lithuanian trade. In particular, as in the case of Lithuania, the presence of Russian merchants in Livonia had very ancient roots and was recorded as early as the 13th century (Selart, 2009). The same as Lithuania, main item of Russian

export on the Baltic market was raw materials – flax, hemp, wax, bread, honey and furs. Originally, the Livonian cities traded only with Novgorod and Pskov and, despite rather complicated relations with various crises, the mutual benefit from trade contributed to the formation of a single trade space. All the conflicts developed according to the same pattern there and did not take radical forms, but invariably ended with the signing of a new peace treaty and the resumption of trade.

However, the strong and complete system of relations disrupted with the beginning of the policy of collecting Russian lands by Ivan III. The actions of the Moscow prince implied an immediate danger for Novgorod and Pskov, so there was a threat that a new, completely unpredictable player would displace already well-known trading partners. Recognizing the danger and trying to help his business partners, the Livonian master Johann Woltus von Herse even tried to create an anti-Moscow coalition, but this project ended in failure. After the accession of the “veche republics”, Moscow did not rebuild the system of relations, but used the existing connections through Novgorod and Pskov. This approach generally fulfilled its functions, but could not change the wary position of the Livonians towards Muscovy; however, it did not prevent the resumption of trade. The new master Bernd (Bernhardt) von der Borch quickly established relations with the Moscow prince, having received the status of friendly neutrality, convenient for commercial activity, in the face of the confrontation between Muscovy and Lithuania (Bessudnova, 2015), that did not agree with the Moscow prince’s claim to possession of Lithuanian lands with an Orthodox population. The benefits from trade with Moscow lands and strong competition with Danish merchants led to the active integration of Livonia into Central and Eastern Europe, where Livonia was forced to mediate between the interests of Lithuania and Muscovy (Tiberg, 1975), while receiving substantial profits from transit trade (Angermann, 2005). According to this conception, Livonia owed flourishing of cities in the 16th century to exactly this phenomenon, but its economic growth raised the interest of neighboring states, who perceived the Livonian lands as an area for territorial expansion.

## **7. Conclusion**

To sum up, it becomes obvious that the Polish-Lithuanian state had significant economic interests in the Baltic region, and it was so strong that had a noticeable impact on the economic structure of the state. First of all, this concerns Lithuania, which relationship with the Livonian lands was much longer and more extensive than that of Poland, due to the direct neighborship. This thesis is confirmed by the agreements: direct relations between Lithuanians and Livonians were repeatedly noted in the agreements, most of which were in somehow connected with Livonian-Lithuanian trade (RLA, n.d.). This is not the case of Poland, which relations with Livonia were less active and, the same as in political relations, were carried out indirectly through Prussia (Urban, 2004). The prospect of establishing control over an economically strong and developed region attracted the neighboring states of Livonia, but the possibilities for direct expansion were limited due to the special status of the confederation as an “Order state”. Thanks to this status, it was under the tutelage of the Pope and the Empire, and therefore any claims to the possession of the lands of the “Order state” invariably started a conflict with these two extremely influential institutions. That fact fully manifested itself after the secularization of the Teutonic Order in Prussia in 1525 year (Jähnig, 2011). The special legal status of Livonia contributed to containing direct expansion, but it did not have the desired effect against gradual economic integration and incursion on the borders at the local level. It predetermined

the severity of the border problem later, which was finally resolved only with the total incorporation of Livonia in the Polish-Lithuanian state.

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