

PERAET 2021**International Scientific Conference «PERISHABLE AND ETERNAL: Mythologies and Social Technologies of Digital Civilization-2021»****TRADE MYTHS: NARVA AUTHORITIES AND NOVGOROD
MERCHANTRY IN THE 15TH CENTURY**

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magistrmb@gmail.com**Abstract**

The absence of Hanseatic status and the strong power of the Livonian Order in medieval Narva of the 15th century largely promoted the formation of a specific management system, which was foremost characterized by cooperation of bailiffs, as representatives of the Order's power, and the town council – the town authorities. In Soviet historical studies the image of both town and Order authorities of Narva is mythologized in large measure, so it needs to be corrected. This article enlarges the understanding of relations between the Livonian Order and Russian merchants at the end of the 14th-15th centuries. This issue is deemed in the light of administrative resources mobilization, that made it possible to create optimal conditions for development of the town upon the whole and, in particular, in the area of international trade. In addition, specific examples of interaction between Order's managers and the town council enable us to enhance our insight of the Order as a ruler, and its degree of involvement into the management of towns, as well as to understand how the justice system of Narva functioned under control of Order's representatives, and later without its participation. A multivariate analysis of unpublished and published archival sources enable us to pose a question on the need to correct some historical cliches about age-old confrontation between the Order and Russia.

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1. Introduction

The development of the Hanseatic-Russian trade was one of the key factors of Narva's existence and strengthening in the Middle Ages. As an important transient center on the trade route Novgorod – Reval (Tallinn) Narva cleverly used all the advantages of its geographical location. The masters of the Livonian Order supported the economic development of Narva by way of various privileges, because they were interested in having a strong defensive post on the border with Russia and wished to slow down the active development of Reval's political and trade influence. At the same time, the absence of Hanseatic status of Narva and Reval's having of Staple right in 1346 slowed down the active development of Narva trade, but did not hurt merchants of Narva to trade with Russia and be involved in mercantile communities with large Tallinn merchants (Kivimäe, 2004).

A discrete role on the move of sales potential of medieval Narva was enacted by the fact of close cooperation between bailiffs and the town council in solving important problems, first of all in the Russian-Livonian trade. Like many other towns in Livonia, Narva was subordinated to the Order as a ruler, i.e., the supreme feudal (Kivimäe, 2004), but we could not say about the total dependence on the town and subordination of the town council to bailiffs, outside of legal proceedings area, in which, however, by the end of the 15th century, bailiffs also lost their dominant position (Yakunina, 2021). At the same time, in Narva, there were no serious contradictions between the town council and bailiffs, that could be observed in other major trade Livonian towns subordinated to the Order (Strenga, 2018, 2019), such as Riga and Reval.

2. Problem Statement

The Hanseatic-Russian and Livonian-Russian trade, as well as Narva's participation in it, have been studied by both Russian (Bessudnova, 2019; Kazakova, 1975; Kleynenberg, 1970) and foreign (Angermann, 2020) historians in historical science. Different aspects of the relations between Reval and Narva in the trade and military-political areas (Dusmann & Nickel, 2018; Koppe, 2020; Leimus & Mänd, 2017; Schlinker, 2019; Selart, 2019), as well as the issue of the participation of the Order administration in commercial affairs were covered separately (Kivimäe, 2019; Kreem, 2020; Sicking, 2017). In Soviet historiography (Kazakova, 1975), the dominant position is taken by the viewpoint of the hostile attitude between the Livonian Order and Novgorod in all spheres of relations, including commercial area. This statement is not absolutely true, but it is being repeated in the articles of historians. In this regard, the basis of this study is the issue of relationship between Narva authorities and Russian merchants, that will be considered through the lens of the mobilization of various administrative resources set sights on optimizing the conditions for the development of international trade of the town, which didn't have access to Hanseatic privileges and thus bound to be reckoned with the pushback from Reval. The study field of this issue is the judicial practice of Narva in relation to cases related to international trade.

3. Research Questions

The successful solution of the stated research problem involves solving the following tasks:

- 1) tracing the cause of action of the Order administration and the town authorities of Narva, which ensured their successful cooperation in commercial business.
- 2) considering the main forms of this cooperation as to trade, trade policy, law and legal proceedings.
- 3) identifying the main features of the relationship between bailiffs and the town authorities with Russian merchants in Narva, as well as with Veliky Novgorod and Pskov.

4. Purpose of the Study

This study is focused on specifics of commercial politics of Order's and town authorities of Narva towards Russian merchants in Hanseatic-Livonian-Russian economic space over the course of the 15th century. The study adds and corrects the ideas that have developed in historical science about the forms of economic cooperation between Russia, Livonia and the Hansa in the 15th century and the role of Narva's administrative structures, which, contrarily to the dominant opinion in Soviet historical science, tried in every possible way to maintain trade with Russia, even in a time of political tensions. The article also corrects the common idea of the confrontation between the Livonian Order and the Livonian towns, as well as visions of the Order's trade policy in respect of Russia. A special attention is given to the fact of solidity of the Order administration represented by bailiffs of Narva and its town authorities, that can be traced both in military-political, and in trade and economic areas.

5. Research Methods

The study is based on a problem-based method, which is focused on identifying of the role of the Order and town administration in development of trade relations between Narva and Russia, first of all Veliky Novgorod and Pskov. It is necessary to find out causes of actions of bailiffs and the town council, forms of contribution to the development of Narva trade, methods of cooperation with each other and its performance. Of special interest is the absence of serious contradictions between the Order and the town, which are observed in regard to Riga and Reval. Methodological techniques such as classification of source material into issue units, structuring and division into thematic subgroups are used. The logic of presentation is based on the principle of "from the particular to the general" and involves the use of specific examples followed by a unifying analysis.

The research method is based on a comprehensive review of archival materials, most of which are represented by the official documentation of the administrative structures of Narva of the 15th century and are currently stored in the Tallinn City Archives. These are the materials from collection 230 dedicated to the town council and the Order's bailiffs. In addition to unpublished sources, the materials are used presented in transcriptions in Middle Low German in two volumes "Liv- Esth- und Curländisches Urkundenbuch" (Hilderbrand et al, 1900). An essential role in this study is played by the analysis of Russian and foreign historiography.

6. Findings

The consensus of decisions of bailiffs and the town council of Narva over the 15th century was due to several factors, the main of which was the wish to increase the economic potential of the town, that meant for the Order the strengthening of the strategically important defense point on the Livonian-Russian border and increase the profitability of the Order's business, because the representatives of the Order's local authorities (Gebietiger) were active involved in commercial operations (Bessudnova, 2021). The main areas of cooperation between the authorities were international trade policy or issues related to town security. We observe surprisingly coordinated appeals from both the bailiff and the town council to Reval in the periods of misfiring relationship with Russia, consisting in requests for weapons, ammunition and people to protect the town.

Judicial precedents connected with Russian lawsuits are of a particular interest for us, because they allow us to determine the main features of relationship of bailiffs and the town council with Russian merchants in Narva. The politics of the bailiffs towards to Russia, although subordinated first of all to interests of the Livonian Order, was often based on efforts to navigate between its demands, demands of the Narva merchants and the trade policy of the Hansa. At the same time, Narva bailiffs parlayed the fact that Narva was not a member the Hanseatic League. So, in 1425, some Ghodeke Westffal appealed to the Narva bailiff with a complaint and reported that his goods were detained in Reval for the reason that he was trading with the Pskovian. The bailiff's reaction is quite telling – in a letter he appeals to the Reval town council to give the goods back and writes that “he [Ghodeke Westffal] is not a member of the Hanseatic League and should stand to Narva” (*hee in der Henze nicht en ist unde hee tor Narwe tho holden*) (Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, n.d.b).

Conflicts with Russian merchants were usually handled personally by bailiffs of Narva or they controlled actions taken by the town council and, if necessary, provided measures to prevent the degradation of economic links. So, in 1472, Heidenreich von Walgarten appealed to the town council of Reval about a complaint from a resident Jacob from Neuschloss (Yamburg) against the Reval citizen Hinrick Kempe, who owed him a large sum of money (Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, n.d.c). This case is notable because the bailiff, if his request was not carried out, promised to bring this issue before the “great assembly” (i.e., Landtag), together with other complaints. If Reval doesn't want to give the case such a serious turn, he has to give the money for Jacob to the bailiff, since he will soon come to him for an answer.

A similar situation is to be observed in 1496, when the bailiff appealed to Reval on the case of Heinrich Fegesak and the Russians, with whom he was in company. Heinrich Fegezak didn't forward the goods promised to the Russians and this was done by a Narva citizen, in connection with this the bailiff asks Reval to obligate Fegezak to return the losses, in other words, so that the private conflict between the merchants doesn't adversely affect international trade that was already tensed at that time, the bailiff of Narva first settles issues with the Russians, and then he resolves issues within Livonia.

It has also to be noted that the activities of bailiffs were not always peaceful and in sync with the interests of the Livonian Order. Thus, in the years 1475-1476, the events described in detail in M. Bessudnova's (2016) article “Bailiff Walgarten's “Faida” and Narva's trade interests” took place. That

time the bailiff of Narva, defending the interests of the town, with the support of the Swedes, started a confrontation with the Livonian Order and obtained the right of a “clean route” for all bailiff’s people and non-Germans. But this case is rather an exception due to Walgarten himself, because in other cases the policy of bailiffs, including trade, depended first of all on the political interests of the Livonian Order and the international climate.

For example, in the spring of 1480, the bailiff of Narva asked the Livonian Master to allow trade with Russia, that was already heavily restricted at that time, and the Master allowed the sale of perishable goods stored in Narva. And on April 15, 1495, the bailiff of Narva informs Reval that a Russian from Novgorod has arrived to him with letters for him and to Reval and asks for “a free way there and back again” (*vryen veligen wegh hebben mochte an und aff*) (Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, n.d.d). Since the power of the bailiff enlarged only upon his district (district of Order subordination), he gave a promise to that Russian of safe passage through his territory, but didn’t let the Novgorodian go further, and sent a letter to Reval, informing about the circumstances and asking what to do with this Russian and others, if someone wants to go from Russia through Narva to Reval in the future. Therefore, Reval sent a letter to the Livonian Master, because he didn’t consider it possible to make a decision in such a situation self-willed – in November 1494, the German mission in Novgorod was closed, the merchants being were captured, their goods were confiscated, and the privileges of the Hansa were canceled.

We observe no less loyal, in some ways even friendly, attitude towards Russian merchants on Narva town council part. So, in the well-known case of Herrmann Gappe and a Pskovian Yakim (Kleynenberg, 1970; Yakunina, 2021) the town council tried to get the Russian side out from process, recognizing the rights of the Russian and then continues to analyze the circumstances of the case between the citizen from Reval and the citizen from Narva.

The position of the town council on keeping trade relations with the Russians is clearly represented in the letter from 1491, in which the Narva town council informs Reval that the Russians from Novgorod came to them and to the bailiff about the retaining of terms of the oath-taking official letter, and that Narva confirmed those terms, wherefore “the Russians asked and wished them to extend hand and make a free passage across the border with their goods according the oath-taking official letter” (*koepman gefraget unde bogert hebbenn, dat men eme de hant darvor wiil streckenn unde updoen, dat ze fry velych aff unde an mogen komen myt oren guderenn uppe deme crucebreff*) (Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, n.d.a) and the bailiff and the town council expressed readiness to support. In the same letter, the town council informs that they became known about the prohibition of trade with the Russians imposed by Reval, which has to be in effect until the embassy returns from Russia, that, in the opinion of the town council, is “in an unchristian way” and as far as this is not the decision of the Livonian Master, they ask the Reval town council to annul “this heavy prohibition”.

7. Conclusion

Narva over the 15th century carried out a policy of strengthening of commercial relations with Russia, that had a positive impact on the attitude towards Russian merchants. Bailiffs using their administrative resources aimed to prevent the escalation of individual Livonian-Russian conflicts, in order to support the development of trade relations with Russian towns (first of all Novgorod and Pskov), and

micromanaged outstanding issues between Narva (and often Reval) merchants and the Russians. Such interest and “large-heartedness” from the Order’s representatives allowed the town council to take a more solid position in relation to the decisions of Reval and the Hanseatic towns and to defend its interests in trade relations with Russia. Such consolidation of power structures supported by the masters of the Livonian Order makes it possible to pose a question of the necessity to correct many historical clichés about the eternal confrontation between Livonia and Russia and, first of all, about the Order’s deterrence to the development of commercial relations between Novgorod and Livonia.

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