
Sea-borne Trade between France and Poland in the XVIIIth Century

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The tradition of maritime trade between France and Poland goes back to the Middle Ages at least, and has been studied by French, German, and Polish scholars although they have not been numerous.¹ Prior to the last war, however, the history of this trade in the XVIIIth century aroused little interest,² and it is only more recently that various aspects of the trade have been studied.³

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES

AN	Archives Nationales (Paris)
AMAE	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
CP	Correspondance Politique
AE	Affaires Etrangères
CC	Correspondance Consulaire

¹ For a brief survey of the state of research on the development of Franco-Polish trade up to the late 18th century, see: M. KOMASZYŃSKI, *Polska w polityce gospodarczej Wersalu (1661-1715)*, Wrocław-Warszawa-Krakow 1968, pp. 9 ff.; E. CIEŚLAK, *Struktura i rola dostaw francuskich w wymianie handlowej Gdanska w drugiej połowie XVIIIw*, in «Roczniki Dziejow Społecznych i Gospodarczych», vol. XXXI, 1970, pp. 143 ff.

² A rare exception is the very interesting article by J. FELDMAN, *Projekty handlu polsko-francuskiego w XVIII w.*, in «Studia ku czci Stanisła wa Kutrzeby», Vol. II, Krakow 1938, pp. 256 ff.

³ M. KOMASZYŃSKI, *Les blés polonais sur les marchés de France féodale*, «Studia Historiae Oeconomicae», vol. 3, 1969, p. 63 ff; Id., *La Pologne dans les plans économique de la cour de France (du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle)*, «Studia Historiae Oeconomicae», vol. 2, 1968, p. 103 ff; E. CIEŚLAK, *Struktura i rola*, p. 143 ff; Id., *Memorial z r. 1772 o handlu Polski z Francją przez Gdańsk*, «Zapiski Historyczne», vol. XXVII/1, 1962, p. 79 ff; Id., *Ostatni memoriał rezydenta francuskiego w Gdańsku z 1796 r.*, «Zapiski Historyczne», vol. XXXVI/4, 1971, p. 117 ff.

Despite the existence of a few studies, however, the history of the sea borne trade between France and Poland in the XVIIIth century remains to be discovered. Although this topic gives rise to numerous questions, the nature of those that can be studied is limited — as is always the case — not only by the imagination of the historian but also by the state of the documents preserved in the archives. It is this which leads me to give a summary description of the documents on which this article had been based, and this will also explain why certain problems are not answered either fully or at all here.

While it is true, on one hand, that there are a greater number of sources available for the study of Franco-Polish sea-borne trade in the XVIIIth century than for the previous century, it is also the case that these are very unequally distributed over the century. For long-term studies there are the registers of the Sund which Nina Bang and Korst have published,⁴ and the statistics of the movement of ships and goods in Danzig published by Czesław Biernat⁵ and Stanisław Gierszewski.⁶ Bearing in mind the valid observations about these registers which have been made by historians such as Christensen,⁷ Doroszenko,⁸ Jeannin⁹ and others, they do still remain a fundamental source for the sea-borne trading relations between the Baltic countries and Western Europe. In particular, if we assume that the probability of inaccuracy and error remains fairly

⁴ Tabeller over skibsfart og varetransport gennen Øresund 1661-1783 og gennen Storebelt 1701-1748 udgivne ved N. E. Bang og K. Korst, første del: Tabeller over skibsfarten, København-Leipzig 1939.

⁵ Cz. BIERNAT, *Statystyka obrotu towarowego Gdańska w latach 1651-1815*, in «Zróżła do dziejów handlu i żeglugi Gdańska», edited by S. Hoszowski, 1, Warszawa 1962.

⁶ S. GIERSZEWSKI, *Statystyka żeglugi Gdańska y latach 1670-1815*, in «Zróżła do dziejów handlu i żeglugi Gdańska», (ed.) S. Hoszowski, 2, Warszawa 1963.

⁷ A. E. CHRISTENSEN, *Der handelsgeschichtliche Wert der Sundzollregister. Ein Beitrag zu seiner Beurteilung*, in «Hansische Geschichtblätter», Jg. 59, 1934, p. 28 ff.

⁸ W. DOROSZENKO, *Eksport Rygi na Zachód w okresie przynależności do Rzeczypospolitej 1562-1620*, «Zapiski Historyczne», vol. XXXI/1, 1966, p. 36 ff.

⁹ P. JEANNIN has studied this problem in detail. See: P. JEANNIN, *Les comptes du Sund comme source pour la construction d'indices généraux de l'activité économique en Europe (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)*, «Revue Historique», vol. CCXXI, 1964, p. 55-102, 307-340; see also A. MĄCZAK, *Między Gdańskiem a Sundem*, «Studia nad handlem bałtyckim od połowy XVI do połowy XVII w.», Warszawa 1972, s. 16 ff.

constant for all the ports and countries concerned, these registers allow us to establish the scale of the different countries' participation in the trade between the Baltic and Western Europe. The statistics for Danzig mentioned above only provide detailed information on the quantities of goods exchanged from 1745 or from 1741 onwards. The two statistics, those for the Sund and for Danzig, only contain quantitative information, and for this reason provide answers to only a fairly limited number of questions. The range is increased where the documents also contain reference to the value as well as the quantity of goods, and there are documents of this sort which refer to Franco-Polish trade. They are to be found particularly in the reports and papers sent by the French factors and agents resident in Danzig to the Minister of Shipping and to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. To mention only the most important of these, there is the memorandum of the French agent in Danzig, Gerard de Rayneval, dated 1772, which contains a detailed analysis of the commercial traffic between the two countries during the whole period 1760-1771, together with statistics on the movement of shipping and goods in Danzig generally, although with particular reference to France, in the years 1774-1791.¹⁰ The shipping lists were sent to the French agent, and could thence be forwarded to the ministers at Versailles, thanks to a small retainer which the agent paid to a clerk in the Danzig Customs House. The lists themselves are not to be found in the Danzig archives.

From the information on the values of the goods exchanged it is possible to tackle certain problems of major importance, such as that of the structure of the trade, its total volume, and its overall balance. We should immediately point out, however, that the lists provide only approximate values and not market prices nor even the prices established by the merchants in their contracts. The prices were established by the Customs House in Danzig which had for centuries specialized in judging values for fiscal purposes.

¹⁰ With a gap for the years 1787-1788 - E. CIEŚLAK, *Memorial z r. 1772*, p. 96; AMAE, Paris, CP, Dantzic, vol. 46, f. 348; vol. 47, f. 210; vol. 48, f. 122, 265; vol. 53, f. 105; AN, Paris, Marine, B7, vol. 426; AN, Paris, AE B1, CC, Dantzic, vol. 480, f. 367 et seq.; vol. 481, f. 50; vol. 482, f. 294.

The toll was based on their estimates, but the results of various detailed comparisons which I cannot discuss here indicate that there was a fairly general equivalence between the values set by the Danzig Customs House and those calculated by Furtak in his study of prices in Danzig in the XVIIIth century.¹¹

There is another difficulty, however, arising from the fact that the maritime commerce between France and Poland between 1760-71 was recorded in *livres*, while the data on the movements of goods at Danzig between 1774 and 1783 are expressed in florins, except for the years 1784-1791 which are given in *livres*. Certain facts and various statements made by the French resident in Danzig permit us to assume that the exchange rate of the florin was the same as that of the *livre tournois* — the two were simply monetary units of account. In 1763, for example, the French agent in Danzig wrote that « the present rate (of the florin) is more advantageous for someone with business to transact here. At this moment 105 *livres tournois* are equivalent to 100 Prussian florins ». ¹² The same situation seems to have obtained later, although there are some contradictions as in 1777 when learn that the *livre tournois* was worth 0.75 florins. ¹³ It is difficult to settle the problem fully since no continuous or specific lists of exchange rates with France were published in Danzig, as all currency regulations were still effected at Amsterdam or Hamburg at this time. ¹⁴ I mention the problem of transferring *livres tournois* into florins, however, as the data on the values of commercial exchanges which I shall discuss will be given in both currencies.

After these introductory remarks we shall now attempt to answer some of the questions relating to Franco-Polish trade. First of all, what proportion of the trade was carried under the French flag and, on the Polish side, under the Danzig flag? Amongst the ships reaching Danzig — Poland's principal port through which

¹¹ E. CIEŚLAK, *Struktura i rola*, p. 150 ff.

¹² Dumont à Praslin - 12.II.1763 - AMAE, Paris, CP, Dantzig, vol. 20, f. 248 ff.

¹³ E.g. the claim by the French resident in Danzig in 1788: « ... the florin is worth just about a French *livre* », AN, Paris, AE B¹, Vol. 482, f. 239.

¹⁴ « AN Paris », AE B¹, vol. 480, f. 231, 233: « AMAE Paris », CP Danzig, vol. 47, f. 207, 209: « AMAE Paris », CP, Danzig, supplement vol. 3, f. 95, 97.

about 80% of her maritime trade normally passed¹⁵ — with goods from French ports, only about 2.2% flew French flags while 51% flew that of Danzig.¹⁶ This would demonstrate that the French ship-owners were not very interested either in trading with Danzig or with the Baltic in general, and this is also true of the previous century,¹⁷ while their counterparts in Danzig did show a lively interest. The latter even showed a particular preference for the trade, and their voyages to French ports even exceeded several times the total number of ships entering Danzig.¹⁸ This phenomenon can be explained in general terms when one remembers that there was a considerable imbalance between the volume of heavy goods exported from Poland to the West and the reciprocal import of a much smaller volume of higher value goods. This is why about 30%, sometimes even 40% and 50%, of all the ships entering Danzig were in ballast. France was an exception, however, because in salt and wine she supplied Poland with two bulk commodities. As a result the percentage of ships from French ports reaching Danzig in ballast was lower than the average. The Danzig shippers exported corn, timber, ash, and other bulk goods to the West and were happy to send their ships into French ports so that they might collect return cargoes, of salt and wine in particular.

The situation was rather different for Danzig exports to France. Here the Danzig flag accounted for only 35.3% and ceded first place to the Dutch, but again French shipping played only a small part, with only 3.7% of the ships engaged in the trade flying French flags.¹⁹ This being so, the complaints raised by the French factors in Danzig about the small part — even the negligible part

¹⁵ The state of affairs in 1756 was fully described in: *Mémoire sur l'établissement d'un depot d'argent pour le service du Roy entre les mains de son résident à Dantzick*, « AMAE Paris », CP, Danzig, vol. 13, f. 180 ff.

¹⁶ Calculated from *Tabeller* part I, for the years 1716 to 1783 and for ships carrying cargo.

¹⁷ M. KOMASZYNSKI, *Polska w polityce gospodarczej Wersalu*, p. 18 ff.

¹⁸ See *Tabeller*, Part I.

¹⁹ In 1724, for example, Maurepas, the Minister of the Navy, rejected the request put forward by the French resident at Danzig, L. Mathy, and advised him to send no further demands but to be satisfied with what he received. At the same time he added «[...] since the King's subjects are hardly involved in any trade in Danzig,

— played by French vessels in the trade between French ports and Danzig were clearly justified.²⁰ It is also worth noting that this situation also had certain military consequences. When in 1733 France sent a naval squadron under the Count of La Luzerne to guarantee Stanislas Leszczyński's election as King of Poland, and when again in 1734 another squadron was despatched under Baraihl together with troop transports to relieve Danzig from siege by Russian troops, the naval authorities had great difficulty in finding ship-masters with knowledge — or, in the phrase of the documents — “having experience” of the Baltic. Not only was it necessary to go round the different French ports looking for them, but they even resorted to pressing them in order to obtain the relatively small number of masters with experience of Baltic navigation required by the fleet.²¹

A second question which might be posed is that of the importance of Franco-Polish trade in relation to the sea-borne trade between French ports and those of the Baltic in general. On average, until the time of the first partition of Poland in 1772, between 150-300 vessels from French ports each year passed the Sund for the Baltic, and about 16% to 28% of these called at Danzig.²² This indicates that Danzig played an important part in Franco-Polish maritime trade in the period. After the first partition of Poland the percentage fell to 5-8.5%, and the number of ships from French ports entering the Baltic also fell.²³

Trade with French ports does not, however, seem at first sight

one could quite easily dispense with your services», «AN Paris», Marine B7, vol. 117, p. 541 ff. Mathy wrote to the foreign Minister, Chauvelin (18.6.1729 - «AMAE Paris», CP Dantzig, vol. 8, f. 309) «[...] it is extraordinary that amongst this great number of foreign vessels only one French ship, from St. Malo, was to be found, and this was the sole French vessel to enter this port this year [...]». See: *Raporty rezydentow francuskich w Gdansk w XVIIIw* (Reports of the French resident agents in Danzig in the 18th century), ed. E. Cieslak and Ruminski, Vol. I (1715-1719), Gdansk 1964, p. 9.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ See the correspondence between the Minister of the Navy and the commanders of the French squadrons and the Naval commissioners in the French ports - «AN Paris», Marine B2, vol. 293, f. 589 ff, 686, 712; vol. 295, f. 317 ff, 322 ff, 405 ff, 488; vol. 356, f. 28, 30 ff, 41 ff.

²² Calculated for five-year periods - *Tabeller*, Part I.

²³ *Tabeller*, Part I.

to have played a major part in Danzig's own trade in the mid-XVIIIth century. This was a period of commercial expansion, and vessels from French ports accounted for only 10-16% of the total number of vessels entering Danzig, and thereafter the percentage declined, to fall first to less than 10% and then below 5%.²⁴

This we can learn from the statistics relating to the movement of shipping. If, however, we look at the same problem in terms of the values of the goods traded then we obtain a very different picture. In the years 1774-91 (for which information on the value of goods is available) the goods imported to Danzig from France represented between 16% and 35% of the port's total imports.²⁵ So it can be seen that French goods played a much more important part on the Danzig market than the percentage of ships bound from French ports would seem to suggest. The following examples will serve to illustrate this: in 1774 only 6.8% of the ships coming into Danzig were bound from French ports and yet the goods which they carried represented 25.4% of Danzig's total imports in that year.²⁶ Our information on the value as opposed to the volume of the imported goods must then force us to revise our previous ideas about the scale of France's share in Poland's maritime trade through Danzig.

We shall also be obliged to change our views — at least in part — about the structure of this trade. It is well known that Poland was almost exclusively a supplier of raw materials to Western Europe.²⁷ The figures for the years 1770-91, however, show that cereals together with timber and forestry products constituted 80-90% of Danzig's gross exports.²⁸ We should also

²⁴ Calculated from: S. GIERSEWSKI, *Statystyka . . .*, p. 72 ff, p. 282. See also S. HOSZOWSKI, *Handel Gdańska w okresie XV-XVIII wieku*, « Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Krakowie », no. 11, 1960, p. 59.

²⁵ « AN Paris », AE B1, Dantzig, vol. 481, f. 185 ff., 202 ff.; E. CIEŚLAK, *Struktura i rola dostaw francuskich*, p. 152.

²⁶ E. CIEŚLAK, *Struktura i rola dostaw francuskich*, p. 152; see S. GIERSEWSKI, *Statystyka*, p. 177.

²⁷ S. HOSZOWSKI, *Handel Gdańska*, pp. 11, 56.

²⁸ E. CIEŚLAK, *Bilan et structure du commerce de Gdańsk au XVIIIe siècle*, « Acta Poloniae Historica », vol. 23, p. 115.

add that these were not the only primary materials exported from Poland. Raw materials, however, also dominated Poland's trade with France. Most important were timber for building, ash, and wool, but — and this unusual characteristic should be emphasised — grain, despite being Poland's most important export commodity was not exported to France in quantity except during years of bad harvests or other difficulties affecting the grain market in France.²⁹

In return France supplied Poland by sea with colonial goods and wines in particular. Coffee and wine alone accounted for 60% of the value of all French imports in Danzing in the late XVIIIth century. If other colonial goods, such as sugar and indigo, and other wine by-products like brandy and vinegar are included as well, then these together with salt constituted 80% of French exports.³⁰ French manufactures, on the other hand, accounted for only 20% of the total value and so were of only secondary value. It can be seen from this that the French exports to Danzig differed from the general Western European pattern in which manufactures predominated in trade with Poland. Franco-Polish trade *did not then reflect consequently* the great division of labour between the production of primary materials in the East and of manufactured goods in the West. But we should immediately add that this is true only in so far as Franco-Polish maritime trade is concerned. There were, for example, considerable exports of Lyons silks which reached Poland overland, although it is not possible to quantify these precisely. The French factor in Danzig, however, estimated that the imports of French silks in Poland were worth about several million florins in the late XVIIIth century.³¹

²⁹ See S. GIERZEWski, *Statystyka*, p. 72 ff.; M. KOMASZYŃSKI, *Les blés polonais*, p. 65 ff.

³⁰ Calculated for the years 1760-1771 from the information sent by the French resident in Danzig. - E. CIEŚLAK, *Memoriał z r. 1772*, p. 89 ff.

³¹ E. CIEŚLAK, *Memoriał z r. 1772*, p. 86: « This state of affairs [i.e. the Prussian customs policy on goods crossing Prussian controlled territories - E.C.] is highly disadvantageous for the silk trade which foreign merchants have hitherto brought to Danzig, and it is already claimed that that of France has undergone a fall of nearly six million [*livres*] ».

The sources show that in the second half of the XVIIIth century France maintained a virtual monopoly over the supply of certain goods, such as coffee (90-100%) and wine (more than 80%), to Danzig, and this was also true of certain other commodities of lesser importance in the general structure of Polish trade, as for example vinegar, brandy, iron cooking pots and stoves. The amount of indigo, sugar and glass ware exported from France to Danzig tended to vary considerably.³² Up to the time of the first Polish partition Danzig also acted as the principal centre for distributing French salt, and between 18% and 30% of France's total exports of this commodity to the Baltic region were destined for the port. French supplies accounted for more than 50% of all the sea salt imported at Danzig, but after the partition Danzig's trade in French salt declined heavily and permanently.³³

In exchange Poland supplied France with goods that were almost exclusively primary materials. Throughout the XVIIIth century France remained a major and unvarying purchaser of Polish timber. Every year numbers of vessels — often about 30 or 40, but on occasions over 60 — sailed from Danzig for French ports with cargoes of timber for planking or building.³⁴ Various attempts were made to increase the scale of this trade, and in the mid-century a leading Danzig merchant named Jean Philippe Schultz tried to gain the support of the King of Poland in order to secure the release of his crew and the ransom of his ship the « Augustus Tertius Rex Poloniae » (a massive vessel of 500 lasts — a really huge size for its day — which had recently been built in Danzig but had subsequently been captured by Barbary pirates off Cadiz) by offering to make massive exports of timber from the royal forests in Lithuania to the West, and in particular to France.³⁵ In 1762

³² E. CIEŚLAK, *Struktura i rola dostaw francuskich*, p. 154 ff.

³³ Cz. BIERNAT, *Statystyka obrotu towarowego*, p. 186.

³⁴ S. GIERSEWSKI, *Statystyka*, p. 72 ff.

³⁵ « Staatsarchiv Dresden », loc. 3654, Vol. III, f. 108 ff, 259, 272, 358; Vol. IV, f. 20, 49, 85; E. CIEŚLAK, *Z dziejów żeglugi i handlu gdańskiego w polonie XVIII w.*, « Rocznik Gdański », vol. XXIV, 1967, p. 70; Id., *Les pirates d'Alger et le commerce de Gdańsk au milieu du XVIIIe siècle*, « Revue d'histoire économique et sociale », vol. L, 1972, N. 1, p. 120.

the French agent in Danzig, Dumont, attempted in vain to persuade the ministers at Versailles to purchase the timber required for the naval dockyards directly at Danzig rather than through Dutch intermediaries,³⁶ and many similar attempts could be added.

France was also a constant and systematic purchaser of Polish ash, although in this case the numbers of vessels sailing for French ports each year was generally less than ten. Cargoes of wool and other goods in casks or bails were fairly rare.³⁷ But since the XVIIth century Poland had acted as the granary of Europe and Danzig had become established as a major cereal-exporting port.³⁸ It has traditionally been believed, however, that France did not purchase Polish grain except when the situation of her domestic market made this necessary, and that this was still the case in the XVIIIth century. There were in fact only two periods in which large consignments of grain were sent to France (1751-2 & 1768-70) with two other periods of more modest exports (1724-6 & 1789-91). In the meantime there were many years in which not a single vessel left Danzig for a French port loaded with grain, and this was because France was able to produce sufficient to meet her own needs, and indeed generally had a surplus.³⁹

In general the value of the maritime trade between the two countries did not balance, and was biased favourably towards France. Gerard de Rayneval, the French agent in Danzig, reckoned that during the period 1760-71 France supplied Poland, through the port of Danzig, with goods worth 3,900,000 *livres* on average each year, and in return purchased there goods worth only 1,500,000 *livres*.⁴⁰ The last of the French residents, Pons, in

³⁶ See the correspondence on this between the resident Dumont and the ministers Praslin and Choiseul - « AMAE Paris », CP, Dantzig, vol. 20, f. 186 ff., 248 ff., 254, 263 ff., 270, 274, 282 ff.

³⁷ S. GIERSZEWSKI, *Statystyka*, p. 145 ff.

³⁸ S. HOSZOWSKI, *Handel Gdańska*, p. 5 ff; M. BOGUĆKA, *Handel zagraniczny Gdańska w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*, Wrocław-Warżawa-Kradów 1970, s. 8 ff.

³⁹ M. KOMASZYŃSKI, *Les blés polonais*, p. 75, pp. 79 ff. For the correlation between the purchases of Polish grain and the shortages of cereals in France see: *Le Prix du Froment en France au Temps de la Monnaie Stable (1726-1913)*, ed. E. Labrousse, R. Romano, F.G. Dreyfus, Paris 1970, p. xiv, table p. 9.

⁴⁰ E. CIEŚLAK, *Memoriał z r. 1772*, p. 89 ff.

1796 at the end of his service at Danzig described virtually the same situation. He stated:

« In an average year we supply goods here [in Danzig] worth between ten and twelve millions, and when we have need of their products they rarely amount to as much as a third of the value of our imports. The other two thirds are left to us in hard cash, so that the trade lies entirely in our favour. Between 1774, when I came to Danzig, and the present the value of France's trade with Danzig had progressively fallen to the current level of about three and a half million *livres* a year ».⁴¹

Despite doubts as to the reliability of the figures given by Pons — although it is the percentages which are really important — it would seem clear that the balance of trade lay definitely in France's favour.

Until the time of the first partition of Poland in 1772, Franco-Polish maritime trade was carried on in what might be termed normal conditions. The partition meant, however, that Poland was denied access to Danzig, its principal port, a fact which had immediate consequences for the port's trade. Shortly before the partition Gerard de Rayneval, French resident at Danzig, still entertained hopes that Prussia's hostile policies towards Danzig would benefit French commerce in the area. What was at issue was Danzig's privileges as a staple port, and Gerard noted on this:

« Even should the King of Prussia succeed in suppressing Danzig's monopoly privileges, this will open up new outlets for French trade and will be the more beneficial since the Poles prefer dealing with Frenchmen so that the gains will be both certain and reciprocal ».⁴²

To be fair to Gerard, however, one must also point out that he did anticipate in a very accurate way an alternative development of Prussian policy which would prove to be not only disastrous for Poland but highly dangerous for Europe as a whole:

« Things will not be the same were Poland's trade to fall entirely under the control of the Prussians; were this to befall one would

⁴¹ E. CIEŚLAK, *Ostatni memoriał*, p. 123.

⁴² Mémoire attached to de Rayneval's report, 15.V.1771 - « AMAE, Paris », CP, Dantzig, vol. 35, f. 183.

need permanently to be on the look out for monopolies, injustices and vexations. The Poles would be absolutely at their mercy, and by this single act the King of Prussia would become the master of Poland. It should also be noted that this Prince disrupts and encourages the trade of foreign nations as the whim takes him or as his political sympathies dictate; any attempt to stand against his wishes must be forceful if it is to succeed, and this generally will lead to war. One need hardly mention the wealth which such exclusive commerce would confer on Prussia and consequently the extent of the resources which it would procure for the sovereign [of Prussia] ».⁴³

There was one important weakness in Gerard's reasoning, and this was that he had no way of predicting which of the two alternatives the Prussian state would follow.⁴⁴ In fact it was the second which was adopted, the most harmful for both Poland and Danzig, while Franco-Polish trade also quickly registered the consequences. This is evident if we compare the value of French imports in Danzig in the years 1760-71 (yearly averages) with those in 1774-91. To broaden the basis of the comparison and to avoid chance results I have attempted to reconstruct the value of French imports for 1770 and 1771, for the years that is which immediately preceded the partition. These figures show that Poland's loss of free access to the port of Danzig caused an immediate (up to 1774) fall in the value of French imports at Danzig of between 1/4 and 1/3, and in the longer term (up to 1791) of 2/3 of pre-partition volume. Expressed in absolute figures this process occurred as follows:

yearly average for 1760-71	3,885,000
1770	4,722,000
1771	3,973,000
1774	2,886,000
1791	1,429,000 ⁴⁷

⁴³ « AMAE, Paris », CP, Dantzig, vol. 35, f. 186 ff.

⁴⁴ Boynes in his letter of the 17.6.1775 to Aigillon emphasized this weakness in Gerard's report - « AMAE, Paris », CP, Dantzig, vol. 35, f. 238 ff.

⁴⁵ E. CIEŚLAK, *Struktura i rola dostaw francuskich*, pp. 152, 160 ff.

⁴⁶ For detailed information see: E. CIEŚLAK, *Struktura i rola dostaw francuskich*, p. 161 ff.

⁴⁷ E. CIEŚLAK, *Memorial z r 1772*, p. 90.

The fall in trade with France reflected the general fall in Poland's trade through Danzig. It is however clear, especially after the time of the first partition, that Danzig trade did not account for all Poland's maritime trade. As a result of the Prussian attempt to destroy the economy of Danzig through exorbitant customs tariffs and other means, Poland's trade with Danzig was shifted to other ports, such as Elblag, Königsberg, Szczecin and Riga.⁴⁸ The French also attempted to find new ways of trading with Poland, but we do not unfortunately have any detailed information on the ensuing displacements of their trade. In general one can, however, assert that these changes in trade routes and so forth did not make up for the fall in trade with France which occurred in Danzig. It was also true that Danzig was the port which was best suited to the needs of French traders in this northern region, as the French resident there informs us.⁴⁹

We should also mention in this context the attempts to reroute both Polish trade in general, and in particular trade with France, through the little port of Polaga in Lithuania⁵⁰ or else via the Black Sea, the latter in particular after the Treaty of Kuczuk-Kainardzi opened up possibilities of developing international trade.

⁴⁸ The French resident in Danzig forwarded information of this sort. For example Pons wrote to Vergennes (4.4.1775) - « AMAE, Paris », CP, Danzig, vol. 45, f. 95): « Riga's trade improves and flourishes in parallel with the decline of that of Danzig ». On another occasion Pons wrote to Vergennes (8.4.1783 - *Ibid* vol. 50, f. 39): « It is fact that due to the inconveniences suffered by Danzig the majority of French goods now go to Elbing, Pislau and Königsberg, especially our wines ». For detailed information on the displacement of trade from Danzig to Elblag see: S. HOSZOWSKI, *Handel Gdańska...*, pp. 30 ff; and *Id.*, *The Polish Baltic trade in the XVth and XVIIIth centuries*, in « Poland at the XIth International Congress of Historical Sciences », Warsaw 1960, pp. 134 ff.

⁴⁹ Pons to Vergennes (7.5.1783 - « AMAE, Paris », CP, Danzig, vol. 50, f. 65 ff): « It is to all purposes certain, Monseigneur, that the port of Danzig is better suited than any other in this part of the North to the needs of French trade ». See also vol. 49, f. 126.

⁵⁰ In 1788 the French chargé d'affaires in Danzig, Brunatti, proposed sending ships laden with French salt destined for Poland to this port in order to avoid the inconveniences and the high customs duties imposed by Prussia - Brunatti to Montmorin (3.10.1788 - « AMAE, Paris », CP, Danzig, vol. 52, f. 291 ff). See also: J. A. WILDER, *Projekt Franciszka Piłsudskiego odbudowy portu pod Polagą*, « Rocznik Gdański », vol. ix/x, 1935-6, pp. xviii ff, and Cz. BIERNAT, *Zycie portowe Gdańska w XVII-XVIII wieku*, in « Pomorze Nowożytne », ed. G. Labuda & S. Hoszowski, Warsaw 1959, pp. 267 ff.

But the projects of Hugon, Moszinski, Bonneau and others could not be put into practice despite the support they received from the Polish King Stanislas Poniatowski, despite the appointment of a Polish consul at Marseilles and despite the creation of a « Polish Company for Black Sea Trading ».⁵¹ The new outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey enforced the abandonment of all these projects. Poland's commerce then remained at the mercy of the Prussians who used every means possible, from high customs duties, administrative hold-ups on the frontiers, and even open violence, to crush Danzig's economy and force the town to yield "voluntarily" to Prussian domination and to exploit further the reduced Polish state.⁵² Finally, as a result of the new partitions in 1793 and 1795, Russia and Austria between them caused Poland to disappear from the map of Europe, while at the same time revolutionary France was also attempting to defend itself from the coalition of European rulers who had declared war against the ideas and principles of progress.

⁵¹ J. FELDMAN, *Projekty handlu polsko-francuskiego*, pp. 254 ff. The ministers at Versailles were interested in the development of this trade and in the attempts of the Polish authorities and the Marseilles' merchants to encourage Franco-Polish trade in the Black Sea — see the correspondence between the French resident in Danzig and the minister Vergennes in the period 1780-6 in « AMAE Paris », CP, Danzig, vol. 45, 50-2. For the appointment of a Polish consul in Marseilles see « AMAE Paris », CP, Poland, vol. 311, f. 467.

⁵² J. A. WILBER, *Traktat handlowy polsko-pruski z roku 1775*, in « Gospodarcze znaczenie utraty dostępu do morza », Warsaw 1937, passim; S. HOSZOWSKI, *Walka Gdanska i Torunia z pruska zaborczoscia w II polowie XVIII w*, in « Pomorza Nowozytne », ed. G. Labuda & S. HOSZOWSKI, Warsaw 1959, pp. 389 ff. The French resident gave much space in his reports to Prussian policies regarding Poland's sea trade — see, for example, the interesting calculations of the customs revenue raised by Prussia on the Vistula (« AMAE Paris », CP, Danzig, vol. 45, f. 358 ff).