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## ARTICLES

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### *The Role of Baltic Trade in European Development from the XVIth to the XVIIIth Centuries*

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This is a very complex issue which despite appearances (for there is a great deal of literature on the subject of the Baltic trade), has only partly been studied. It should be examined from at least two points of views, one socio-economic and the other cultural. It is particularly the latter that has not been examined.

The XVIth and XVIIth centuries are often called the era of Baltic trade. The great geographical discoveries at the end of the XVth century changed the network of the main transport routes. The old trading centres declined and new ones rapidly developed (Antwerp, Amsterdam, Baltic ports) following the shift in world trade from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and the Baltic sea. These changes were linked to the new forms of international commerce: the low volume and mainly luxury trade of the Middle Ages gave way in modern times to large-scale trading in basic consumer commodities, especially grain and raw materials. Hence the dependence of many countries on the products of distant regions and regular shipping and transport became an indispensable condition of existence for the peoples drawn into the orbit of international trade.

All this was mainly the consequence of the extremely rapid population growth in XVIth century Europe<sup>1</sup> and comparatively slow development of agriculture in the most populated countries of Western and Southern Europe.<sup>2</sup> The doubling of the number of inhabitants in some regions and rapid urbanisation caused a rapid increase in the demand for basic consumer goods, particularly foodstuffs. At the same time, the low level of farming techniques made it impossible to meet that demand locally. This lag in agriculture was at the root both of the XVIth century price revolution (which can only partly be attributed to the inflow of American silver to Europe) and the emergence of poverty and famine on a mass scale which, according to some scholars, had no parallel in the Middle Ages.<sup>3</sup> In the existing circumstances there were only two ways in which to resolve the problem of lack of food: either intensification of production (which was difficult to carry out rapidly because of slow technical progress), or the search for new sources of supply and it was that which linked the expansion of Baltic trade and the growth of its role in the life of the rapidly developing European economy.

Contemporaries were well aware of this. As early as the late XVIth century Baltic trade was described in the Netherlands

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<sup>1</sup> For a review of recent studies see M. REINHARD, A. ARMENGAUD, J. DUPAQUIER, *Histoire générale de la population mondiale*, Paris 1968.

<sup>2</sup> Several formerly food exporting regions found themselves in a situation in which they were forced to import foodstuffs. See F. BRAUDEL, *La méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen au temps de Philippe II*, Paris 1966; G. CONIGLIO, *Il regno di Napoli al tempo di Carlo V*, Napoli 1951; J. GOY and E. LE ROY LADURIE (eds.), *Les fluctuations du produit de la dîme*, Paris, The Hague 1972; M.J. ELSAS, *Umriss einer Geschichte der Preise und Löhne in Deutschland*, Leiden 1949; M. MORINEAU, *Les faux-semblants d'un démarrage économique: agriculture et démographie*, Paris 1971; P. RAVEAUS, *L'agriculture en Haut Poitou au XVIe s.*, Paris 1926; B.H. SLICHER VAN BATH, *De agrarische geschiedenis van West-Europa, 500-1850*, Utrecht-Antwerp 1960; H. VAN DER WEE and E. VAN CAUWENBERGHE (eds), *Productivity of Land and Agricultural Innovation in the Low Countries (1250-1800)*, Leuven 1978. Flanders and Brabant in the XVth c. already depended on the importation of Baltic grain, see M. J. TITS-DIEBUAIDE, *La formation des prix céréaliers en Brabant et en Flandre au XVIe s.*, Bruxelles 1975.

<sup>3</sup> See W. ABEL, *Massenarmut und Hungerkrisen im vorindustriellen Europa*, Hamburg 1974.

as "moederhandel" or "mother trade." Politicians, especially in Spain, at the turn of the XVIth century, often said that it was precisely this trade that had made possible the armed rising of the Dutch provinces and the later emergence of the independent Republic of the United Provinces (Holland). Without the deliveries of Baltic grain and materials for building their fleet, the rebels would have had to capitulate quite early.<sup>4</sup> Contemporaries also emphasize the interdependence of England and the Baltic region through the exchange of textiles and raw materials.<sup>5</sup> The optimism of the Polish gentry in the XVIth and XVIIth centuries was mainly due to the firm conviction that Polish grain was and would always be indispensable for the existence of the West of Europe.<sup>6</sup>

Recent studies in general confirm this picture, but reduce its validity chronologically to a span of approximately one century (1550s-1660s), when every failure or delay in the arrival of a Baltic fleet caused famine in Amsterdam and other large towns in the West, and even in the South of Europe.<sup>7</sup> It seems that only towns with less than 20,000 inhabitants, itself a considerable size in the Middle Ages, could live on local supplies. When population exceeded 30,000-40,000, the town's neighbourhood was incapable of meeting its demand for grain in full.<sup>8</sup> In the XVIth century the situation became even more acute due

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<sup>4</sup> Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Legajo, 592, 614, 631, 2024, 2025, 2036, 2847. See also the opinion of an anonymous Flemish writer from the first half of the XVIIth c., "Een merkwaardig aanvalsplan gericht tegen Vischereij en Handel der Vereenigde Nederlanden in de eerste helft de 17de eeuw. Medegedeelt door P.I. BLOK", *Bijdr. en Meded. Hist. Gen. Deel XIX*, 1898.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>6</sup> See M. BOGUČKA, North European Commerce as a Solution Factor of Resource Shortage in the XVIth-XVIIIth cc., *Natural resources in European History*, ed. A. Maćzak and W.N. Parker, Washington D.C. 1978, pp. 9-42.

<sup>7</sup> H. Wätjen, *Die Niederländer in Mittelmeergebiet zur Zeit ihrer höchsten Machtstellung. Abhandlungen zur Verkehrs- und Seegeschichte*, Bd. II, Berlin 1909, p. 121.

<sup>8</sup> R. Mols, Population in Europe 1500-1700, in *The Fontana Economic History of Europe. The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. by C.M. Cipolla, London 1976, pp. 42-43.

to the switch in the countryside from corn growing to sheep pastures (England, Spain), to the cultivation of olive trees and vineyards (Spain, Italy), vegetables, flax and hops (Brabant, Flanders, Zeeland) and to the development of dairy farms (Holland, Friesland). Meanwhile, the number of towns with more than 40,000 inhabitants, which in the early XVIth century had been 26, nearly doubled and rose to more than 40 by the end of the century. At the end of the XVIth century, this group included some giants with more than 150,000 inhabitants (Constantinople, Naples, Paris, London, Milan, Venice) and over 100,000 (Rome, Seville, Amsterdam, Lisbon, Palermo, Antwerp). No wonder, then, that grain crises, which had been acutely felt in the first half of the XVIth century, should become extremely intense by the end of the century and were to rage mostly in the Netherlands, the Iberian Peninsula and Italy, (i.e. in the most urbanised areas of Europe). In addition, a major role must have been played by the devastation of France (which had exported grain in the XVth century), by the religious wars, as well as the crisis in the rural Netherlands caused by the anti-Spanish rising and the long drawn out war for liberation waged by the northern provinces. Throughout this most critical period for the consumer in Western and Southern Europe, which was to last until the end of the first decade of the XVIIth century, it was no longer the traditional supplies from Sicily and Africa, nor the additional transport of grain from Constantinople, but the agricultural produce from the Baltic zone that proved to be of critical importance. Although yields there were low, the political pre-eminence of the gentry and the absence of major urbanisation allowed all the surpluses obtained (mostly at the expense of peasant consumption) to be sold abroad. We know that at the turn of the XVIth century an average of 50-70,000 lasts of grain went through the Sound annually.<sup>10</sup> This was a considerable amount in

<sup>9</sup> F. BRAUDEL, *La méditerranée...* Polish edition Gdansk 1976, vol. II, pp. 604 ff.

<sup>10</sup> A.J. FABER, *Het probleem van de dalende graanaanvoer uit de Oostzeelanden*

view of the probably somewhat modest estimate of the Amsterdam merchant Joost Nykerke, in 1630, who put the entire annual consumption of grain in the Netherlands at the time at 40,000 last.<sup>11</sup> According to H. Brugmans, in the mid-XVIIth century Amsterdam alone needed some 21,000 lasts.<sup>12</sup> With a population of about 140,000<sup>13</sup> this would average some 0.75 kg of grain per head per day. Calculations for other towns at the time (Gdańsk) yield similar results (0.65-0.70 kg a day).<sup>14</sup> Naturally, only part of the Baltic grain remained in the Netherlands (where, after all), domestic production was still considerable and grain was imported from other sources as well e.g. Archangel.<sup>15</sup> Considerable quantities were re-exported (or went straight from Baltic ports) to other countries: England, France, the Iberian Peninsula, and Italy, depending on the demand in those markets. Not only did demand fluctuate, as it depended every year on the local harvests in various parts of Europe, but supply also fluctuated considerably because of the irregularity of Baltic deliveries, which in turn were tied to the varying harvests in that region and to the political situation (war, disruption and the frequent closures of the Sound). Consequently, there were years when more than 100,000 lasts were freighted through the Sound, but quite frequently the supplies fell to 5,000, 10,000 or 20,000 lasts or even

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in do tweede helft van de zeventiende eeuw, AAG, *Bijdragen, IX Afdeling Agrarische Geschiedenis Landsbouwhogeschool*, Wageningen 1963, p. 7 which calculates Dutch imports alone at 50,000 lasts.

<sup>11</sup> See O. PRINGSHEIM, *Beiträge zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklungsgeschichte der Vereinig-Niederlande im 17. und 18. Jhr.*, Leipzig 1890, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> H. BRUGMANS, *Opkomst en bloei van Amsterdam*, Amsterdam 1944, p. 114.

<sup>13</sup> P. SCHRAA, *Onderzoekingen naar de bevolkingsomvang van Amsterdam tussen 1550-1650*, Amstelodamum, vol 46, Amsterdam 1954, p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> M. BOGUĆKA, *Urząd zapasów a konsumpcja Gdańska w pierwszej połowie XVIIw.* (Board of Reserves and Food Consumption in Gdańsk in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century), *Kwartalnik Historii Kultury Materialnej*, vol. XVIII, 1970 no 2, pp. 255-260.

<sup>15</sup> M. BOGUĆKA, *Zboże rosyjskie na rynku amsterdamski w pierwszej połowie XVIIw.* (Russian Grain on the Amsterdam Market in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century), *Przegląd Historyczny*, 1962 no 4, pp. 611-627; Z. GULDON S. ZALEWSKI, *Eksport zbożowy Rosji w XVI-XVIII w.* (Grain Exports from Russia in XVIth-XVIIIth cc), *Zapiski Historyczne*, vol XLII, 1977, no. 1. pp. 27-45.

stopped altogether for some time. The grain trade had a built-in element of risk and speculation, and the grain prices in the Netherlands and other countries of Western and Southern Europe fluctuated considerably on a monthly and yearly scale.<sup>16</sup> The irregularity of Baltic supplies sometimes caused quite serious, temporary, upsets in the provisioning of the largest European towns (particularly in 1557-1559, 1562-1564, 1570-1578, 1586-1587, 1590-1591, 1628-1631). In the XVIth and first half of the XVIIth century the existence of urban populations on the scale then attained made them definitely dependent on the Baltic granary in two senses of the term: both as a supplier of food and as the supplier of the materials needed for the building of ships to carry that food. The expansion of the Dutch and English merchant fleets in the XVIth and XVIIth centuries, as is well known, depended on primary materials such as timber, flax, hemp and tar, which were imported from the Baltic region.

What might be called "the grain stage" in the Baltic trade lasted up to the mid-XVIIth century. In the second half of that century and in the XVIIIth century, the food situation in Western and Southern Europe underwent a fundamental change which resulted in a diminished demand for Baltic grain.<sup>17</sup> The slowing down of demographic growth, and even a decline in the number of inhabitants in certain countries due to wars and plagues, as well as the intensification of domestic agriculture (in the Netherlands, England, France) together with the introduction of new crops (rice and maize — chiefly in the Iberian Peninsula and Italy) freed some regions from their former dependence on Baltic imports.<sup>18</sup> D. Ormrod has emphasized recently

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<sup>16</sup> Recently on this problem see: P. W. KLEIN, *Quantitative Aspects of the Amsterdam Rye Trade During the XVIIth Century and the Economic History of Europe, Contrum voer Maatschapij geschiedenis*, Rotterdam Erasmus Universiteit, Mededelingen no 2, Rotterdam 1978.

<sup>17</sup> A. J. FABER, *Het problem van de dalende graanaanvoer...* passim; M. BOGUCKA, *North European Commerce...* passim.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

England's role in this process and claimed that in the second half of the XVIIth and first half of the XVIIIth century English grain replaced Baltic supplies on the international markets.<sup>19</sup> In the second half of the XVIIIth century the import of grain from America and increasing cultivation of potatoes, which revolutionized the structure of mass consumption, dealt the final blow to the importance of Baltic grain supplies. Other commodities then came to the fore in Baltic trade, and this could be called "the raw material stage" because at the top of the list in the exports to the West going through the Sound were timber, metals, flax, hemp and tar which were shipped to developing early capitalist factories.<sup>20</sup> These shifts in the content of the Baltic shipment were followed by changes in trading partners. Agricultural Poland, the West's main trading partner in the XVIth and early XVIIth century, proved unable to adapt herself to the new requirements of the international markets and was importing fewer Western products due to the impoverishment of her gentry. She was pushed aside by Sweden, Russia, Norway, Latvia, Estonia and Finland, the countries which supplied the raw materials in demand and in turn bought the goods offered by the West.<sup>21</sup> As a result important transformations took place in the Baltic zone. Its importance as a producer and supplier for Western Europe continued, although the nature of Baltic supplies changed and they began to play a role in sectors of the West's economy different from those at the earlier stage.

As well as, and thanks to, its role in the supply of foodstuffs

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<sup>19</sup> D. ORMROD, *Le déclin industriel et commercial néerlandais et la croissance britannique à la fin du XVIIe s.* in: *Transition du féodalisme à la société industrielle: L'échec de l'Italie de la Renaissance et des Pays-Bas du XVIIe siècle*, ed. by P. M. Hohenberg and F. Krantz, Montreal 1975.

<sup>20</sup> M. BOGUCA, *North European Commerce...*; E. HARDER-GERSDORF, *Lübeck, Danzig und Riga. Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Handelskonjunktur im Ostseeraum am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts*, *Hansische Geschichte sblätter*, 96 Jhrg. 1978, pp. 106-138.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*. See also A. ATTMAN, *The Russian and Polish Market in International Trade 1500-1650*, Göteborg 1973.

and raw materials, Baltic trade also fulfilled extremely important functions in the sphere of capital accumulation. The studies of merchant profits in the Baltic trade show a high rate of profit — higher than in other branches of European trade, and only slightly lower than in the early colonial trade.<sup>22</sup> It is precisely because of the high profitability of Baltic trade that first the Hanseatic League and the Dutch, and then later the Dutch and the English fought fiercely for its mastery. The Sound was a gold mine for the Danes; the wars which dragged on for many years between Poland, Sweden, Muscovy and Denmark for the *dominium maris Baltici* were waged, to a large extent, to conquer the Baltic ports and subordinate Baltic trade. Not only did the rulers and powers of the North carry out their intrigues in this area, but also the Spanish Hapsburgs, and one of the phases of the Thirty Years' War was clearly centred on the Baltic. If we accept the records of the Sound customs books we can see that in the first half of the XVIIth century an average of some 70,000 lasts of grain went through the Sound annually to the West and that the merchant's profits amounted to 521 g of silver per last (on shipping to the Dutch ports).<sup>23</sup> From this we can estimate a total annual profit for the export merchants of some 36,000 kg of pure silver. In comparison, it is interesting to note that the output of the famous mines at Potosi (Peru) amounted in 1533 to 11,537 kg, in 1534 to 56,534, and in 1535 to 27,183 kg

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<sup>22</sup> See M. BOGUCKA, *Zur Problematik der Profite in Handel zwischen Danzig und Westeuropa 1550-1650* (in the press).

<sup>23</sup> Calculated on the basis of price differences between Amsterdam and Gdańsk (with corrections suggested by P. JEANNIN, *Press-Kosten und Gewinnunterschiede im Handel mit Ostseegebiet 1550-1650*, in: *Wirtschaftliche und soziale Strukturen im säkularen Wandel. Festschrift für Wilhelm Abel zum 70. Geburtstag*, vol. II, Hannover 1974, pp. 494-517) minus transport costs, customs duties etc. See M. Bogucka, *Handel zagraniczny Gdańska w pierwszej połowie XVII w.* (Gdańsk Foreign Trade in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century), Wrocław 1970, p. 148. J. FABER estimates the average difference between the price of rye at Arnhem and the price of rye at Gdańsk in 1560-1599 at about 514 grams of silver, in the years 1600-1649 at 417 grams of silver in the second half of XVIIth c. at 446, and in the years 1700-1749 at 388 grams of pure silver, *op.cit.* p. 5, table I.

of pure silver.<sup>24</sup> Other branches of the Baltic trade, the export westwards of raw materials, and the imports of colonial goods and industrial products eastwards must also have been very remunerative.<sup>25</sup> So Baltic trade must be considered as an extremely rich source for capital accumulation, which was exploited mainly not by local Baltic merchants but by the enterprising agents of the West-European, mainly the Dutch and English, trading classes. It is difficult to assess the role of those profits in the development of the rapidly modernising societies of Western Europe (especially Holland and England) because of the lack of detailed studies. But next to the trade with colonies, it seems that it was the main source of the rapidly growing wealth of the merchants who, in the XVIth-XVIIth centuries, clearly constituted a leading social group which was slowly turning into the modern bourgeoisie.

In the early XVIth century, the Baltic markets also constituted an extremely important area for West-European industry.<sup>26</sup> The production of Dutch and English textiles would have been unthinkable on such scale without the export possibilities in that region. Recently scholars have pointed to the fact that the swift development of the rural Netherlands in the XVIth and early XVIIth century was also connected with the import of Baltic grain, and thus with the Baltic trade, although it may seem like a paradox.<sup>27</sup> It made possible specialisation of production in the Netherlands and the shift from grain to dairying, brewing, vegetable growing and the cultivation of industrial crops (flax,

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<sup>24</sup> See P. VILAR, *Or et monnaie dans l'histoire, 1450-1920*, Paris 1974, p. 133.

<sup>25</sup> See M. BOGUCKA, *North European Commerce... and Zur Problematik der profite* (in print).

<sup>26</sup> See R.W.K. HINTON, *The Eastland Trade and the Common Weal in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge 1959; B.E. SUPPLE, *Commercial Crisis and Change in England, 1600-1642*, Cambridge 1959; H. ZINS, *England and the Baltic in the Elizabethan Era*, Manchester 1972.

<sup>27</sup> See H. VAN DER WEE, *The Agricultural Development of the Low Countries as revealed by the Tithe and Rent Statistics, 1250-1800*, in *Productivity...*, pp. 10 ff.

tobacco); it also facilitated the organisation of cottage industries (mainly weaving), thus stimulating the progress of early-capitalist industry in the countryside

Baltic trade was one of the important factors in the urbanisation and industrialisation of the West of Europe, but looks somewhat different when analysed from the point of view of the other partner — North-Eastern Europe: The “colonial” thesis, put forward sometime ago by M. Małowist,<sup>28</sup> has been recently questioned by J. Topolski and A. Wyczański, who have tried to demonstrate from the case of Poland that the export of grain had constituted quantitatively too slight a margin of the agricultural production of the countries taking part in the Baltic trade to influence either the progress of their economic or their social development in any vital way.<sup>29</sup> This poses certain other problems which need to be discussed further. It also seems that other aspects of the question should be considered, particularly that of the balance of Baltic trade which in the XVIth-XVIIIth centuries was extremely positive for the entire Baltic region, as A. Attman has demonstrated.<sup>30</sup> One must also ask what happened to the stream of money and metals flowing through, thanks to the Baltic trade, which found its way mainly into the pockets of the Eastern magnates and the gentry. Credit operations, on one hand, and money speculation, on the other, doubtless drained that stream,<sup>31</sup> yet it was still powerful enough

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<sup>28</sup> M. MAŁOWIST, “The Economic and Social Development of the Baltic Countries from the XVth to the XVIIth Centuries” *Economic History Review*, 11th ser. vol XII, 1959, No. 2.

<sup>29</sup> See J. TOPOLSKI, Commerce des denrées agricoles et croissance économique de la zone baltique aux XVIe et XVIIe s., *Annales, Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 1974 no. 2, pp. 425 ff. A. WYCZAŃSKI, La base intérieure de l’exportation polonaise des céréales dans la seconde moitié du XVIe s., in *Der Aussenhandel Ostmitteleuropas 1450-1650*, Köln-Wien 1971, pp. 260 ff.

<sup>30</sup> A. ATTMAN, *The Russian and Polish Markets...* pp. 10 ff.

<sup>31</sup> See M. BOGUCKA, Obrót wekslowo-kredytowy w Gdańsku w pierwszej połowie XVII w. (Bills of exchange and Credit Turnover in Gdańsk in the First Half of the XVIIth Century), *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, vol. XXXIII, 1972, pp. 1-31;

to make a strong impact on the living standards and social relations of such countries as Poland, Lithuania, Ducal Prussia, Livonia, and somewhat later (second half of the XVIIth and XVIIIth century) Russia as well. "Here (i.e. in the Baltic trade) lies the reason why those people from the East and from Poland have become so rich, so impudent and haughty; here lies the reason that they now ride in four-in-hands though once they simply walked," wrote Joost Nykerke in 1630.<sup>32</sup> Baltic trade ought certainly to be examined not only from the production angle but also from the angle of national income, its division, and the nature and size of consumption within the framework of this income, and in relation to the various social groups. Baltic trade was linked with the rapid growth of the prosperity of the gentry as well as of the great nobles in the agricultural Baltic countries and the high level consumption of luxury goods which was a feature of their life-style. The same can be said of the Baltic townsfolk in the ports of Gdańsk, Elbląg, Riga, Königsberg, Klaipeda, Narva, etc. who acted as intermediaries between the feudal lords of the hinterland and West-European merchants. The trade with the Middle and Far East was an extension of Baltic trade, and the purchases of jewellery, richly ornamented arms, rugs, fabrics woven with gold and silver were possible thanks to the money produced from the sales of agricultural produce to the West.<sup>33</sup> The latter also contributed directly to the growth of this luxury consumption, and supplied the Baltic zone with expensive textiles, southern fruits and wine, and spices. When analysing consumption, one should remember too a characteristic phenomenon which some scholars consider as an

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idem, Zur Problematik der Münzkrise in Danzing in der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jh., *Studia Historiae Oeconomicae*, vol. VI, 1971, pp. 65-73.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted after M. BOGUĆKA, *Zboże rosyjskie...* p. 620.

<sup>33</sup> See M. ZAKRZEWSKA-DUBASOWA, *Ormianie zamojscy i ich rola w wymianie handlowej i kulturalnej między Polską a Wschodem (Armenians from the City of Zamość and their Role in the Trade and Cultural Exchanges between Poland and the East)*, Lublin 1965.

investment, others as a form of consumption.<sup>34</sup> That is the expenditure connected with culture, such as the building of palaces and churches, the purchase of work of art, the pensions given to builders and artists; in brief, the whole range of cultural patronage exercised by the magnates and the gentry, as well as by the wealthiest townsmen, thanks to the profits gained in the Baltic trade.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, one should not forget the phenomenon of hoarding, which in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries seems to have played an enormous role in the economy of the Baltic region, though the scale and consequences have not been fully studied.<sup>36</sup>

The impact of Baltic trade then was varied and affected different spheres of life; it was not limited solely to production and the social relations directly connected with it. Further studies in this field will doubtless elucidate the aspects which have remained controversial and studied only in part. It should also be pointed out that this survey is mainly limited to the southern part of the Baltic region. Norway and Finland which exported timber to the West,<sup>37</sup> and Sweden which, while exporting iron,

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<sup>34</sup> See the conference in Prato, 1976: *Nona Settimana di Studio; Investimenti e civiltà Urbana secoli XIII-XVIII* (in the press).

<sup>35</sup> M. BOGUCKA, Le bourgeois et les investissements culturels. L'exemple de Gdańska dans la première moitié du 17e s. *Revue Historique*, vol. CCLIX, no 2, pp. 429-440; J. Wojtowicz, Miejskie inwestycje kulturalne w Prusach Królewskich w XVI-XVIII w. (The cultural investments in the cities of Royal Prussia in the XVIth-XVIIIth cc.), *Zapiski Historyczne*, vol. XLIII, no 2, pp. 25-44.

<sup>36</sup> M. BOGUCKA, The Monetary Crisis of the XVIIth Century and Its Social and Psychological Consequences in Poland, *The Journal of European Economic History*, 1975 no 1, pp. 137-152.

<sup>37</sup> S.E. ASTROM, *From Cloth to Iron: the Anglo-Baltic Trade in Late Seventeenth Century*, Helsinki 1963; *Idem*, Technology and Timber Exports From the Gulf of Finland 1661-1740, *The Scandinavian Economic History Review*, vol. XXIII, no 1, 1975; *Idem*, English Timber Imports from Northern Europe in the Eighteenth Century, *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, XVIII, 1970; J. SCHREINER, *Nederland og Norge 1625-1650. Trelast utførsel og handelspolitikk*, Oslo 1933; *Idem*, Et problem i norsk trelasthandel, *Historisk Tidsskrift*, XLIII, 1964; *Idem*, Fremmede Marknader for norsk trelast, *Historisk Tidsskrift*, XLIV, 1965.

was keenly engaged in setting up her own industry,<sup>38</sup> were certainly drawn into the orbit of the Baltic trade just as strongly as were Poland and Lithuania, yet they reacted to it in a different way. In the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries Russia also tried to built up her own industry on the basis of the Baltic trade.<sup>39</sup> These examples may serve as a warning not to treat that trade as a unidirectional causal factor, isolated from its context, one-sidedly determining the course of economic and social development, and even the political system as the "colonial" thesis would seem to suggest. The Baltic zone, the development of which had been certainly to a large extent stimulated in the XVIth-XVIIIth centuries by the trade with the West, was not a uniform area and its various regions reacted very differently to contacts with the Western economy.

Closely associated with trade were migrations and exchanges of population. Even in the Middle Ages the Baltic was a much frequented travelling route from the East to the West and vice versa. Next to ships, masters and sailors, merchants and their agents, artisans and journeymen used it, as well as those travelling to foreign countries for business purposes, to gain education or to visit the famous towns and holy places; the scholars and artists, diplomats, rulers with their retinues, and the soldiers transported on board ships for various military operations. Between the XVIth and the XVIIIth centuries, this traffic increased massively, not only because of intensified economic and cultural contacts but also because crowds of religious and political refugees fled across the Baltic from the Netherlands, England, France and Sweden, and sought asylum in more tole-

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<sup>38</sup> See E.F. HECKSCHER, *An Economic History Of Sweden*, Cambridge 1954.

<sup>39</sup> See E. AMBURGER, *Die Familie Marselis*, Giessen 1957; A. OHBERG, Russia and the World Market in the Seventeenth century, *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 1955, no. 2; D.S. VAN ZUIDEN, *Bydrage tot de kennis der hollandsch-russische relaties in de 16e-18e eeuw*, Amsterdam 1911; *Idem*, *Nieuwe bydrage tot de kennis wan de hollandsch-rusrische relaties in de 16e-18e eeuw*, *Economisch-Historisch Jaarboek*, 1916.

rant Poland.<sup>40</sup> Besides the East-West exchange, migrations also followed a North-South direction; at the turn of the XVIth century in particular a considerable number of Swedes emigrated to Poland.<sup>41</sup> This traffic involved various different social groups which gave their movements different consequences. The peasant immigration from the Netherlands to Poland is relatively the best known and studied; it continued the settlements which had began far back in the Middle Ages.<sup>42</sup> In Pomerania, Great Poland and Kujawy, experts brought from the Netherlands drained the marshes, dug canals, built windmills which later served as flour and fulling mills, and established model farms. Also the inhabitants of the Netherland towns came to Poland, especially in the XVIth and early XVIIth centuries; among them were owners of considerable financial means and various skilled specialists (architects, painters, teachers as well as weavers, haberdashers, distillers, etc.).<sup>43</sup> It is worth noting that the banking and credit operations in Pomerania in the XVIth-XVIIth centuries developed very much under the influence of these immigrants, both in theory and in practice.<sup>44</sup> In the second half of the XVIIth and in the XVIIIth century, migration across the Baltic was no longer to Poland but mainly to Sweden and Russia, whose rulers, to a large extent, with the help of Western merchants

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<sup>40</sup> J. TAZBIR, *A State Without Stakes. Polish Religious Toleration in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, New York - Warsaw 1973.

<sup>41</sup> St. HERBST, Swedish Emigrants in Poland at the Turn of the XVIth and the XVIIth Centuries, Poland at the XIth International Congress of Historical Sciences in Stockholm, Warszawa 1960, 206-216; S.M. SZACHERSKA, *Uczeni szwedzcy na emigracji w Polsce* (Swedish scientists as emigrants in Poland), *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce*, vol. XVII, 1972, pp. 5-26.

<sup>42</sup> See R. MAUER, *Drei Jahrhunderte Bauernleben in der Weichselniederung*, Poznań 1935; R. SZPOR, *Nederlandische Nederzettingen in Westpruisen gedurende den Poolschen tijd*, Enkhuisen 1913; also Polish works of B. Baranowski, St. Inglot, Z. Ludkiewicz and W. Rusiński.

<sup>43</sup> See M. BOGUCKA, *Rzeczpospolita szlachecka a Niderlandy w XVI-XVII w.* (Polish Commonwealth and Netherlands during XVIth-XVIIth centuries) (forthcoming).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*.

and specialists, tried to develop their national industries and introduce technical innovations.<sup>45</sup>

The exchange of people and of commodities went together with an interchange of cultural ideas and trends. The lively economic contacts with Western Europe, as well as the internal links between the Baltic countries resulted in the emergence of a specific cultural zone with distinctive common features despite the many individual ones.<sup>46</sup> This zone had taken shape in the Middle Ages and included, first and foremost, the Baltic ports with their characteristic architecture, their art, their specific social and political forms of life and their highly developed intellectual activity.<sup>47</sup> Comparative studies in this field are, unfortunately, rather modest and the problems relating to it still await thorough examination.<sup>48</sup> It will be important to study the impact exercised by the culture of the Baltic towns and the intellectual and artistic currents flowing through them to the more remote hinterland of the Baltic coast. This problem has received some attention in the case of Gdańsk and the impact of Dutch culture on the Polish lands between the XVIth and the XVIIIth centuries.<sup>49</sup> To describe the results of this research is beyond the

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<sup>45</sup> See note 39 + K. KUMLIEN, Staat, Kupfererzeugung und Kupferausfuhr in Schweden 1500-1650, in: *Schwerpunkte der Kupferproduktion und des Kupferhandels in Europa 1500-1650*, ed. by H. KELLENBENZ, Köln-Wien 1977, pp. 241 ff; B. BOETHIUS, Swedish Iron and Steel, 1600-1650, *Scandinavian Economic History Review*, 1958, pp. 149 ff. Problemy rozwinia feodalizmu i kapitalizmu w stranach Baltiki. Doklady istoriceskij konferencii 14-17 marca 1972 (On problems of the feudal and capitalistic development of Baltic countries. Rapports of a conference 14-17 March 1972), Tartu 1972.

<sup>46</sup> See A. MAĆZAK, H. SAMSONOWICZ, La Zone Baltique: l'un des éléments du marché européen, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, vol. XI, 1965, pp. 71-99.

<sup>47</sup> See K. FRIEDLAND, Träger und Gegenstände kultureller Vermittlung im spätmittelalterlichen Ostseebereich, *Studia Maritima* vol. I, 1978, pp. 29-38; H. SAMSONOWICZ, Les liens culturels entre les bourgeois du littoral baltique dans le bas moyen âge, *ibidem*, pp. 9-28.

<sup>48</sup> First attempt being made by J.B. NEVEUX, *Vie spirituelle et vie sociale entre Rhin et Baltique au XVIIe s.*, Paris 1967.

<sup>49</sup> See M. BOGUĆKA, *Rzeczpospolita szlachecka* (note 43); *idem*, Gdanski-Polski czy międzynarodowy ośrodek gospodarczy (The city of Gdańsk-Polish or international economic centrum?) in: *Polska w epoce odrodzenia*, ed. A. Wyczański, Warszawa 1970,

framework of this paper, however, but they should be included as a supplement to this brief survey of the range of questions posed by the problems connected with the role of Baltic trade.

PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES PASSING VIA THE SOUND  
(ANNUAL AVERAGES)  
1590-1599 = 100

	First half of the XVIIth century	Index	Second half of the XVIIth century	Index	First half of the XVIIIth century	Index
<i>Westwards:</i>						
Grain (lasts)	68500	121,4	55800	98,9	31800	56,4
Iron (Shippound)	14713	195,6	36742	488,6	131832	1753,3
Timber-Planken (in sixties)	1281	193,5	12089	1826,1	53283	8048,7
<i>Eastwards:</i>						
Salt (lasts)	25889	106,2	21305	87,4	25821	105,9
Herrings (lasts)	7715	158,6	3077	63,3	3366	69,2
Textiles (pieces)	55646	190,9	39952	137,1	41972	144,6
Colonial-wares (1000 pound)	485	6956,8	2589	37118,2	7463	106614,2

\* Estimated at about 40 ellen each.

Source: N. BANG, K. KORST, *Tabeller over Skibsfart og Varetransport gennem Øresund: 1497-1660*, vol. I, 2B, København 1933; *1661-1720*, vol. II, 1, København 1939; *1721-1749*, vol. II, 2, København 1945.

1970, pp. 100-125; A. BOROWKI, *Polska a Niderlandy. Związki i analogie kulturalne i literackie w dobie humanizmu, renesansu i baroku* (Poland and the Netherlands. Connections and Analogies in Culture and Literature of the Time of Humanism, Renaissance and Baroque), in: *Literatura staropolska w kontekście europejskim*, Wrocław 1977, pp. 233-252; K. GUTMANÓWNA, *Wpływy niderlandzkie na średniowieczne malarstwo cechowe w srodowisku krakowskim* (Influences from Netherlands on the medieval painting in Cracov), Kraków 1933; J. KIESZKOWSKI, *Artysci niderlandzcy w Europie w schodniej* (Artists from Netherlands in Eastern Europe), Lwów 1922; W. TOMKIEWICZ, *Z dziejów polskiego mecenatu artystycznego w XVII w.* (On polish cultural investments in the XVIIth c.), Wrocław 1952.