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BALTIC SHIPPING IN THE 17TH–18TH CENTURIES
IN THE LIGHT OF MATERIALS FROM THE ARCHIVE IN AMSTERDAM*

Key words: Baltic trade in the 17th century, Gdańsk merchants, Dutch merchants; Gdańsk trade, Polish-Dutch trade, Polish-Lithuanian noblemen [szlachta], Polish-Lithuanian aristocracy in the 17th century, Polish noblemen and the Baltic trade

I received dozens of flashcards from the director of the archive in Amsterdam with records regarding trade in Gdańsk and contacts with Poland in the 17th–18th centuries. These flashcards were stored in my wardrobe for several dozen years and now I have time to prepare them for publication. This work will complement and continue my article published in 1973.¹

The 17th–18th centuries is a very turbulent period in the history of the Baltic region. The 16th century was the epoch of the great development of the Baltic trade, thanks to which the Polish-Lithuanian gentry farm flourished, producing grain as well as forestry and breeding goods, sought by the rapidly growing population of Western Europe. In return, the magnates and noblemen of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth bought expensive fabrics, jewels and exotic spices imported by Gdańsk and Dutch cities. The situation changed dramatically around 1600, when Sigismund III Vasa involved the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in a war with Sweden, striving to control the Baltic and its shores. In the years 1600–1611 there was a Polish-Swedish war in Livonia, which was recommenced in 1617. In 1629, by virtue of the truce concluded in Stary Targ, the Swedes detained a number of strongholds in Prussia and Royal Prussia along with their previous gains in Livonia. When, in 1632, Władysław IV took over the Polish throne, wishing to strengthen

* The article devoted to the memory of Dr Simon Hart, the head of the Amsterdam Notary, from whom I received a precious gift of several dozens of flashcards with the information concerning the trade with Gdańsk and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They constitute a precious foundation for this article.

¹ Maria BOGUCKA, *Amsterdam and the Baltic in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century*, *The Economic History Review*, vol. 26: 1973, issue 3, pp. 433–447.

the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Baltic zone, he began building a number of war ports and organizing the royal fleet of capers. However, Gdańsk forced him to abandon those plans, which the noblemen of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were indifferent to.

Meanwhile, the situation in the Baltic Sea was still restless so that the transport of goods was irregular. The Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) and the division of West Pomerania between Sweden and Brandenburg (1648) complicated the situation of the Baltic trade. When the Swedish “deluge” flooded the Polish-Lithuanian state (1655), destroying towns and villages (along with robberies and rapes, people suffered because of hunger, floods, fires, and many infectious diseases), it turned out that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was not able to export as much grain as before. There also appeared competition in the form of Russian grain, and Western Europe began to develop its own food production. Apart from rye and wheat, new potatoes brought to Europe appeared on the markets. In addition, Polish lands began to experience difficulties in the access to the sea. The Gdańsk port still belonged to Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but getting to it was not easy, because it was necessary to cross the Prussian border. Thus, there appeared ideas to develop the Black Sea trade that would compete with the Baltic Sea.

In the 18th century, agriculture continued to grow in Poland and Lithuania. In many estates, owners exchanged serfdom for rent so that the peasant would be interested in the production, which would increase the yield. The country, however, was destroyed by wars, enemy invasions and marches of Polish and foreign armies, rapes, robberies, and contributions. The state of the decline was deepened by natural disasters, which in the 18th century were very frequent and occurred almost every year (droughts, floods, hailstones, fires, plagues, locust plagues).

Due to a change in the situation on global markets (development of agriculture in Western Europe, the beginning of grain exports from Russia), the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth lost its position as a monopolistic international granary in the middle of the 17th century. Exports fell to 30–35 000 lasts of grain a year – decreasing by more than a half; the prices that were obtained for grain could not satisfy producers. The growing export of wood, tar and ash could not compensate for this loss as the demand for grain also shrank on the domestic market due to the decline in the number of city dwellers and their impoverishment.²

² *Baltic Affaires. Relations between the Netherlands and North-Eastern Europe, 1500–1800. Essays*, ed. Jacques Ph. S. LEMMINK, J. S. A. M. VAN KONINGSBRUGGE (Baltic Studies, 1), Nijmegen 1990, passim.

As a consequence, the unfortunate processing of excess grain into beverages – beer and booze commenced. To ensure the sufficient demand for so much alcohol, the nobility introduced a propination monopoly to their goods, i.e. a ban to produce alcohol by peasants combined with the obligation to purchase a certain amount of court alcoholic drinks. It had fatal consequences for the health and culture of the village.

The outbreak of war between Turkey and Russia-Austria (1780) played a major role in the situation of the Baltic exchange at the end of the 18th century. After the death of Frederick II (1786), the new Prussian king Frederick William II set up the alliance with the Netherlands and England beginning to favour Turkey. This encouraged Sweden to attack Russia. The war took place all over the Baltic Sea; the ships with the crews made up of Turks and Tatars were once again on the sea. Chaos and a sense of danger increased, which changed every cruise into a kind of roulette.³

The year 1772 brought the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It marked the dramatic devastation of the “grain granary” – that is the gentry farms supplying the entire Baltic region with grain products through Gdańsk. Gdańsk, which belonged to Prussia on the basis of the partition convention, defended itself desperately before admitting representatives of the new authorities to the city, refuting four assaults, but eventually the city gave in.

The first partition meant for the Commonwealth a loss of over 200 000 km², i.e. 30% of the area. The population decline was about 35%. Within the boundaries of the Polish-Lithuanian state, about 7 million people remained. In the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Baltic, Gdańsk and the entire Baltic zone, a certain epoch ended.

Research on the Baltic exchange has been carried out for years, but it still needs to be deepened. On the basis of the previous literature, as well as the data contained in the previously unused flashcards from the Amsterdam Notary Records, one may reconstruct the structure of the former Baltic fleet. Among the ships the following are enumerated: large caravels and galleons (each with a capacity of about 200 lasts), cogs and holks (capacity of about 100 lasts each); the so-called scaphies, smacks and *burdynas* (Bordinger) (90–100 lasts); ships called krayer, dogger, ballinger, cavassen (about 60 lasts); and finally small (up to 20 lasts) iceboats and full-rigged pinnaces, floating on the Vistula River and the coastal waters of the Gdansk port.

The most frequent routes from Gdańsk include the following ports: Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the coasts of Mecklenburg, the Canary Islands, Te-

³ *Seehandel und Wirtschaftswege Nordeuropas im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, hrsg. v. Klaus FRIEDLAND, Franz IRSIGLER, Ostfildern 1981.

nerife, Marseilles, Livorno, Genoa, Sicily, Zealand, Rewel (Tallinn), Liepāja (Liepāja), Ventspils, Königsberg, a small island in the Baltic Sea – Osland⁴, Gotland and Bornholm.

The winter break in shipping lasted from December 6 (Saint Nicholas) to February 9 (Our Lady of Candlemas). At that time, the traffic in the port was dying. There were also occasions when the port was closed for speculative purposes.⁵ Half of Gdańsk vessels operated exclusively on the Baltic Sea and did not sail out of the Sund.⁶ It was connected with their small size. Apart from ships operating on the Baltic Sea, numerous river ships operated in the Gdańsk port, transporting grain and wood from the interior of the country for export. For this purpose, “dubas” ships (20–25 lasts) and “lichten” ships (10–20 lasts and rooms for 8–16 crew members – the so-called raftsmen) were used. In the Gdańsk port, after getting rid of grains, the ships were sold on wood.⁷

Baltic shipping, especially in the 17th and 18th centuries, was dangerous. Apart from inclement weather and storms, a considerable threat were corsairs; ships belonging to conflicting countries (Spain, England, Portugal, the Netherlands – the Republic of the United Provinces) carried out regular battles; the Ottoman Empire cast a menacing shadow over the entire Baltic zone until Jan III Sobieski broke it. Yet, the area was still not safe – even the inland was threatened by assaults. On 28 September 1663, two young Poles, Michał and Abraham, testified in a trial concerning Samuel Herbicki from Gdańsk, a former captain in the service of the Polish king who in 1650 had been kidnapped by a group of Tatars prowling around Toruń and sold to Turkey with his two children. Released by the English, he returned to his homeland, but his children remained in Turkish captivity.⁸ Biographies of this type were relevant in the lives of many residents of the once powerful Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

However, the profits from the Baltic trade were so significant that dangers were often ignored. The trade in East Indian fabrics going through Gdańsk in the mid-17th century gave at times even 50% of profit.⁹ Lower profits were provided by the trade in grain – sometimes even only 1,5% (1663), but it was

⁴ Oslandia is a small island in the Baltic Sea, the port of which was often used by numerous Hanseatic, Dutch, and English merchants; comp. Henryk ZINS, *Anglia a Bałtyk w drugiej połowie XVI wieku*, Wrocław 1967, pp. 38, 123.

⁵ Comp. Maria BOGUCKA, *Handel zagraniczny Gdańska w pierwszej połowie XVII wieku*, Wrocław 1970, p. 18 ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁷ M. BOGUCKA, *Amsterdam and the Baltic*, pp. 433–447.

⁸ *Gemeentearchief Amsterdam* (further cit. GAA), Not. Arch. 2866/116v, Not. Bernhardt Coornhart.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Not. Arch. 2194/672, Not. Adrian Lock.

necessary for the functioning of the countries situated in the Baltic Sea basin such the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.¹⁰

Through Gdańsk, magnates and wealthy noblemen satisfied their sophisticated appetites even in the years of famine, spending huge sums on sweets and fancy desserts. The statement of 5 September 1625 of three Amsterdam merchants (they were Dutchmen – Goossen, Sirxma and Casper van Beringen) proves that in 1625 they sent to Gdańsk anise, almonds, candied sugar, rice, coffee, nuts, raisins, lemons, figs, nougat, ginger, saffron, licorice, syrup, chestnuts, apples, plums, cumin, cinnamon, cloves, mace, capers, olives – all in all over 7225 guilders' worth of goods.¹¹ The Dutch and Gdansk merchants had no problems selling these types of products, making fortunes on the Baltic trade.

The goods exchanged in the Amsterdam Notary Records, sent from the port of Gdansk, are divided into several groups: groceries (salt, rye, wheat, barley, oats, peas, plums, onions, fat, butter, sugar, fish, spices), "shipping" goods (flax, hemp and its varieties, tow, phloem, ropes, masts, oars) and various goods (feathers, wool, metals, tar, tallow, wax for making candles, skins, various chemicals such as gunpowder, saltpeter, dyes, alum, ash and potash for making cloth, soap and glass). The more income the nobility derived from the production and sale of ash and potash, the more important it became that the Polish resources were over, as wrote Ignacy Krasicki in the 18th century:

“Gdyby nie było potażu
 Nie byłoby ekwipażu;
 Skarb to nie dosyć wielbiony
 Z popiołu mamy galony”
 [“Were it not for potash
 There would not be equipage;
 The treasure is not worshipped enough
 From it we get gallons of ash” – transl. Agnieszka Chabros].¹²

The trade in furs also developed. On 13 September 1663, Frans Vermande, an Amsterdam merchant of fur, confirmed that he owed two Dutchmen, Peter and Ludwik Oosterling, 7450 guilders bearing the 5% interest for fur. These furs were to be sent to Hamburg, to the merchant Abraham Stockman the Elder and further to Gdańsk, probably to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.¹³

¹⁰ M. BOGUĆKA, *Handel zagraniczny Gdańska*, p. 61.

¹¹ GAA, Not. Arch. 391/173-181, Not. Jacob Jacobs.

¹² Cit. after: Henryk ZINS, *Anglia a Bałtyk w drugiej połowie XVI w. Bałtycki handel kupców angielskich z Polską w epoce elżbietańskiej i kompania wschodnia*, Wrocław 1967, p. 271.

¹³ GAA, Not. Arch. 1843 A, pp. 203–204, Not. Nic. Kruys.

The trade in textiles, especially those of Eastern (Turkish) origin such mohair and silk grew. They were made of fine worsted wool. In the mid-17th century, Władysław Stanisław Jeżowski wrote:

“Lepszy mieszczce muchajer niedrogi, turecki
Niżeli adamaszek przedni a wenecki,
Dobry czamlet, ale też sukienka czerwona
Lepsza niż aksamitna szata kosztownie zdobiona”

[“A townswoman is better off with cheap Turkish mohair
Than with the first-class Venetian damask,
Silk fabric is good, and the red dress
Is better than the richly adorned robe” – transl. A.Ch.].¹⁴

A type of thick fabric of Turkish mohair, wool and sometimes silk called grosgrain was also in use. Initially, it was imported to the Baltic Sea from Turkey and the Levant, and then sold to Poland and England. It was soon also produced in Gdańsk and other Pomeranian cities¹⁵.

The Amsterdam Notary Records contains numerous data concerning the visits of the nobility from the territory of the Republic of Poland in the Netherlands. From the beginning of the 17th century, the fashion for foreign travel for touristic, cognitive and scientific purposes caused an influx of noblemen to Dutch cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Leiden, Gouda, Haarlem, Groningen, Nijmegen. The young Sarmatians traveled to the Netherlands to learn military art – artillery, war engineering, siege art, shipping. Here they had the opportunity to admire the fortified castles protected by deep moats filled with water, which hindered access to the besiegers. They also came across a lifestyle which differed significantly the Sarmatian lifestyle as it glorified economy and rationality. „Taki też tym ludziom sam stylus że z obłomistych assystencji szydzą” – wrote Arian Krzysztof Arciszewski¹⁶. And he added: „ci ludzie jako tu w oczy z Francuzów i tych ludzi co się zbytnimi strojami i assistencjami szerzą, szydzą, tak i sami tego nie używają ani na pogrzebach, krzcinach, weselach i actach publicznych żadnych apparentii nie stroją”¹⁷.

¹⁴ Władysław Stanisław JEŻOWSKI, *Oekonomia abo porządek zabaw ziemiańskich [...]*, ed. Józef ROSTAFIŃSKI, Kraków 1891, p. 67.

¹⁵ Comp. Maria BOGUĆKA, *Gdańsk jako ośrodek produkcyjny w XIV–XVII wieku*, Warszawa 1962, p. 323 n.

¹⁶ Aleksander KRAUSHAR, *Dzieje Krzysztofa z Arciszewa Arciszewskiego, admirała i wodza Holendrów w Brazylii, starszego nad armatą koronną za Władysława IV. i Jana Kazimierza: 1592–1656*, vol. 2, Petersburg 1893, p. 88

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, Petersburg 1892, pp. 166–167.

It is worth looking at how far Arciszewski's observations were accurate and what traces of the visits of the Polish nobility in the Netherlands may be found in the sources. As our source are notarial deeds, the picture may be slightly distorted, but it provides a lot of information. It turns out that young Poles sometimes spent several years in the Netherlands. They rented accommodation in inns belonging to female Dutch owners. Their gallant manners seduced women who were accustomed to the coarse behaviour of their fellow countrymen. Noblemen happened to use this infatuation to commit minor monetary frauds, to act under false names, or to promise marriage despite having a legal spouse in Poland. There are sources for this type of issues, including the files of the trial which Matylda Bökop from Utrecht brought to the church court against the nobleman Stanisław Koniecpolski in the mid-17th century. He married her in 1647; the spouses lived in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and in the Netherlands. In 1655, Stanisław Koniecpolski returned from the Netherlands alone and announced that his wife had died; he soon remarried. Matylda learned about it, she came from Utrecht to Gdańsk and led to the trial and conviction of Stanisław Koniecpolski for banishment in 1660.¹⁸

Here is some information from the files of the Amsterdam Notary Records, which I have not used in my previous works, and which refer to the activity of Polish noblemen in the Netherlands and the debts they owed to Dutch merchants. In July 1615 Willem Guilliotis, a resident of Amsterdam, testified that he had lived in the inn of the wife of Hans Bandlebort for three weeks. There was also a Polish person known as Monsieur de la Bastille who traded in silk and other fabrics. Unfortunately, the lack of further data makes it impossible to verify the life story of this undoubtedly ingenious, itinerant merchant¹⁹.

The files of the Amsterdam Notary Records in Amsterdam show the considerable indebtedness of the Polish nobility from Dutch merchants. These were loans taken out for two, three, sometimes more months, which were to cover current needs, to purchase various goods, to pay the cost of the stay in the Netherlands and others. Several examples have been collected. On 18 June 1619 Marcin Opachowski of Prussia (Royal Prussia?) and Merckel van Behemp, plenipotentiaries of Hans Pople of Lobkowice, Augustine van Schuisburg and Adam van Schwanburgh testified before a notary that they had taken from Daniel Olben and Henry Broen, merchants in Amsterdam, 2000 carolus guilders. The loan was to be returned within three months in Amsterdam.²⁰ Paweł Rożyński and Andrzej Szczepanowski testified on 17 June 1643 that

¹⁸ Edyta BEZZUBIK, „Sprawy małżeńskie przed sądami kościelnymi w Polsce XVII wieku”, Białystok 2000 (typed), pp. 140–141.

¹⁹ GAA, Not. Arch. 200–378, pp. 234–236, Not. Nec. Jacobs and J. F. Bruyningh.

²⁰ Ibid., Not. Arch. 200, fol. 230–231, Not. J. F. Bruyningh.

they owed to Michael Heuslit Drackenberg residing in The Hague 468 guilders and 14 stuivers of the supplied cloth, canvass and other goods, which were received by Adam Sobeski (Sobieski?). They were to pay for the goods within eight months.²¹ Also, on 17 June 1643 Grzegorz Hołowczyński of Litowa in Poland testified that he owed the merchant from The Hague, Michael Heuslit Drackenberg, 5600 carolus guilders and 6 stuivers for cloth, canvas and other goods received by him and his brother Mikołaj in Gdańsk. He was obliged to pay for the goods within eight months.²²

Likewise, on 17 June 1643 Krzysztof Rzczycki from Dzierkowice in Poland testified that he owed to the same merchant from The Hague 942 carolus guilders for cloth, canvas and other goods received by Adam Sobeski from Skrzyna in Poland. He was to pay for it within eight months.²³

On 17 September 1643, Aleksander Koniępcowski and Marcin Czarniecki, gentlemen from Poland, admitted to the notary public that they owed to Michael Heuslit Drackenberg of The Hague 4184 carolus guilders for various goods; the payment was to take place within eight months. Ms. Annetje Harmans, the widow of Jonas Rusch, who lived in Leiden, guaranteed to answer for their debt.²⁴

In the same vein, on 17 June 1643 Krzysztof Rzczycki from Dzierkowice in Poland testified that he owed to Jan Lambertsen Drooch, the owner of the inn in The Hague, 1200 carolus guilders for covering the costs connected with the visit of Adam Sobeski from Skrzyna in the Netherlands. He pledged to settle this debt within eight months.²⁵ Two months later, on 17 September 1643, Aleksander Koniępcowski and Marcin Czarniecki testified that they owed Annetje Harmans, the widow living in Leiden, 5034 carolus guilders for accommodation, food and various small items. The payment was to be made within five months.²⁶

Our sources fail to inform whether the debts were eventually paid off or whether subsequent agreements were concluded. However, they contain interesting information concerning the role of the social position in economic tenders. Like politicians today, they occupied a privileged place in monetary speculations. In a note of 28 November 1644 it reads that Stanisław Oborski, a longtime supporter of the Prince of Orange, guaranteed to answer for a debt of 2350 carolus guilders, which Paweł Ottersewski from Poland owed

²¹ Ibid., Not. Arch. 1570, fol. 150–151, Not. Pieter Capoen.

²² Ibid., Not. Arch. 1570, fol. 151–152, Not. Pieter Capoen.

²³ Ibid., Not. Arch. 1570, fol. 153, Not. Pieter Capoen.

²⁴ Ibid., Not. Arch. 1570, fol. 267, Not. Pieter Capoen.

²⁵ Ibid., Not. Arch. 1570, p. 154, Not. Pieter Capoen.

²⁶ Ibid., Not. Arch. 1570, p. 268, Not. Pieter Capoen.

to Michael Drackenbergh, a banker from The Hague.²⁷ Such a guaranty meant more than a pledge of goods.

However, the image of the nobility's debt is only one side of the coin. As the revenue from farming decreased, and even the increased exploitation of the peasant could not prevent the living standards of the owners of the farms from falling, entrepreneurs began to look for ways to stop unfavorable processes. The nobility from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth quickly learned to give proxies to merchants from Gdańsk and Amsterdam to trade in grain, wool, wood, potash and imported goods on their behalf.²⁸ More resourceful individuals began to trade on their own. In September 1643, Aleksander Koniępcowski, Marcin Czarniecki and Mikołaj Zaremski set up a commercial company; each of them contributed with the share of 1500 guilders. The guarantor was Annetje Harmans from Leiden, who ran the inn where visitors from Poland stayed.²⁹ Marcin Zamoyski was very mobile and ingenious. The contract of 23 November 1680, recorded into the Amsterdam Notary Records, informs that the secretary of Count Marcin Zamoyski – Hieronim Jan Drelingh set up a company with the German Jew merchant Salomon Izraelis to trade in Gdańsk, Königsberg and the entire Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.³⁰ The starost of Nakło, Jan Proska, residing in Świekatów ("Satkij") joined the venture. The company began trading extensively. In 1681 it purchased and sent to Gdańsk and Königsberg 66 000 pounds of wool, 5000 Schiffspfunds of potash boxes, a thousand masts and 3000 hundreds of firewood.³¹ The Amsterdam Notary Records often mentions Jan Paweł Lubieniecki from Lubienice³² as an active participant in trade. As a result of the devastation of Polish agriculture, in the mid-17th century in the Baltic trade instead of grain there appear "forest" goods (leather, wax, wood) and semi-finished products (wool, potash, metals), along with industrial products, including fabric. The sale of cloth various types of which went through Gdańsk not only to Poland but also to London became more and more significant.³³

²⁷ Ibid., Not. Arch. 1572, p. 581, Not. Pieter Capoen.

²⁸ Examples: *ibid.*, Not. Arch. 2249, Not. Adrian Lock (17 Feb 1676); Not. Arch. 4513/373; 4513/378, Not. E. de Witt (29 Oct 1680); Not. Arch. 5512/446, Not. Johan v. d. Kerckhoven (June 1684); Not. Arch. 4963/723, Not. P. de Witt (July 1684); Not. Arch. 5539/60, Not. S. van Assingh (October 1689).

²⁹ Ibid., Not. Arch. 1570, fol. 268, 269, Not. Pieter Capoen (18 Sept 1643).

³⁰ Ibid., Not. Arch. 4513/570, Not. E. de Witt (23 Nov 1680).

³¹ Ibid., Not. Arch. 4513/350, 378, Not. E. de Witt.

³² Ibid., Not. Arch. 570, fol. 269 (18 Sept 1643); Not. Arch. 2249, Not. Adrian Lock (17 Feb 1676); Not. Arch. 4513/373, Not. E. de Witt (29 Oct 1680).

³³ Ibid., Not. Arch. 4963/723, Not. P. de Witt.

Through Gdansk, Polish magnates bought expensive accessories and precious stones, including pearls and diamonds, which constituted an important element of Sarmatian weapons and clothing.³⁴ Merchants on the Baltic Sea traded also in the ownership of ships³⁵ and even passports,³⁶ which provided greater safety and the protection from ships on the part of the fighting powers.

At the end of the 17th century, the Baltic Sea became even more dangerous than before. This is evidenced by numerous entries in the Amsterdam Notary Records. The following are examples: the lawyer Mathias van Coppenol, the representative of Ewerard Exton, notary at the Admiralty of England, in May 1690 became the plenipotentiary of Tomasz Paine, Emanuel Krause and Albert Groddeck, merchants from Gdańsk, advertising the ship “The Artushof” alias “The Exchange”, captured by Englishmen. The trial and the interrogations took place in the English Court.³⁷ In August 1692, Cornelis Sluis from Ventspils (Widawa) testified that in the previous year he had been employed by Count Moreau as a skipper on the ship “Elisabeth”. On 29 November 1691, upon his order, he sailed to France, where he freighted wine. On the way back, he was attacked and robbed by the bandits around the Zealand Islands. He also lost another ship entrusted to him, called the “King William”.³⁸

Despite the dangers, there were plenty of people willing to engage in trade in the Baltic region. To reduce the risk of possible losses, trade companies merged. The capital brought in by each partner was usually quite significant, ranging from 3 to 10 thousand guildens.³⁹ The commission for the sale of grain in the mid-17th century was usually 1,5%, the capital designated for loans in sea trade – 0,5%.

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³⁴ On 27 April 1649 the Gdańsk merchant Johannes Pieters testified that in November 1649 he had received two sets of diamonds – in total 96 pieces / 5,25 guilders each – altogether worth 504 guilders from Hieronim Broen and Jachim Raevens. He sent the diamonds from Gdańsk to Lublin, to the Lublin merchant Leonard van Hoest, see: GAA, Not. Arch. 1099/521, Not. van de Ven; Not. Arch. 2193/312, 321, 381, Not. A. Lock.

³⁵ The company of Dawid and Gilles d’Orville authorized by the Gdańsk merchant Daniel Fremante sells to Jacques and Jean Peyrou, merchants from Amsterdam, one-fourth of the ship “The Queen of Poland” / “Królowa Polski” (skipper Dirck Swaen) for 1200 guilders, see: GAA, Not. Arch. 5219; 5539/60, Not. S. van Assing (25 Oct 1689 – 31 May 1690).

³⁶ Karol Wiciejewski, a plenipotentiary of the spouse of Count Moreau, in the years 1690–1691 used several passports, which made it easier for him to travel safely in the Baltic Sea.

³⁷ GAA, Not. Arch. 5219, Not. D. Doornick (31 May 1690).

³⁸ Ibid., Not. Arch. 5265/284, Not. S. van Sevenhoven (13 Aug 1692).

³⁹ Ibid., Not. Arch. 1058, fol. 47, 49, Not. J. van de Ven (14 Feb 1640); Not. Arch. 1058, fol. 199, Not. J. van de Ven (15 Feb 1642); Not. Arch. 2232/622, 623, Not. Adrian Lock (29 Mar 1670); Not. Arch. 1706 B/1499, Not. F. de Barij (1 Dec 1656).

Earnings of craftsmen working in Baltic ports usually fluctuated from 30 to 50 (for specially qualified ones, e.g. soap makers) guilders per month.⁴⁰ Salary earnings depended on their place in the hierarchy of services employed on a ship for a given cruise. For example: on 13 October 1662, Paul Quisser of Gdańsk testified that three years earlier he had been hired as a “sailor on a boat”, i.e. as a crew assistant, by Bomoen Bast of Hoorn, a skipper on the ship “Ganze Welt” – “The whole world” with just 12 guilders a month.⁴¹

Earnings of people working in the ports depended on the temporary, very volatile situation. Marten Beeter, a ship carpenter, employed in April 1670 by the tsar of Russia, was supposed to receive, for example, 45 guilders a month.⁴² The king of France paid even better that year, offering from 35 to 50 guilders a month.⁴³ Such was the amount of money promised by Mathurin Pelicot, who acted on the king’s behalf completing the crew for the ship “Die Witte Rose” – “White Rose”, which was to become part of the Royal Navy.⁴⁴

Gdańsk merchants did not regret spending money on learning the profession and improving the quality of manufactured goods. A note of 28 September 1657 informs that the resident of Gdańsk Johan du Pree hired a soap manufacturer Herman Jansen from Denmark for four years in order to teach him the production of high-quality soap and detergents. The pay for these services was to be 600 guilders a year, which was equivalent to 50 guilders a month.⁴⁵

In the Baltic Sea, alongside hard-working seamen and dock workers, there were many types of crooks, fugitives, criminals sought by the authorities. In October 1652, the special envoy of the tsar of Russia, Joan Hebdon, authorized Willem Anselmo, currently in the service of the King of Spain, to search in the entire Baltic region for a man who falsely claimed to be the son of tsar of Russia, to capture him and send him to Poltava, Novgorod or another place in the area subordinate to the tsar. Similar authorizations were also given to two Gdańsk merchants, Arendt van Heusteen and Konrad Klenck.⁴⁶ Pirates and corsairs attacked merchant ships loaded with goods.

Perhaps these dangers meant that the freight duties for the transportation of goods were high. In 1634, they amounted to between 14 and 28 guilders for one last.⁴⁷ Large sums were also recorded in loans secured by the ship and the so-called bottomry. Here is a set of data on this topic:

⁴⁰ Ibid., Not. Arch. 3160/205, Not. Jac. Pondt (24 Sep 1663).

⁴¹ Ibid., Not. Arch. No. 2290, fol. 6, 111, Not. Jacob de Winter (13 Oct 1662).

⁴² Ibid., Not. Arch. 3679a, fol. 622, Not. F. Tixerandet (19 Apr 1670).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Not. Arch. 1122, fol. 196, Not. Justus van der Ven (28 Sep 1657).

⁴⁶ Ibid., Not. Arch. 2193/312, Not. A. Lock (11 Oct 1652).

⁴⁷ Ibid., Not. Arch. 668/29, 163-164, 222, Not. Jan Warnaearts (17 Mar 1634).

| Amsterdam Notary Records (GAA, Not. Arch.) | Skipper | Loans secured by the ship | | | The first cruise | % |
|---|-----------------------------|---|---|----------------|--|--|
| | | Ship | creditor | Prussian marks | | |
| 27 August 1606, Not. J. F. Bruyningh (103/111) | Torckel Laurens, Gdańsk | "De Witte Eenhorn" – "White Unicorn" | Jacques and Hans van Hanswijck | 600 | Only the islands | 31% |
| | | | Jacob Claes Rock | 300 | Return Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Middelburg | 16% |
| 13 July 1607, Not. J. F. Bruyningh (108/111) | Andries Grip of Gdańsk | "De Grip" (40 lasts) | Jacob Lucasen of Gdańsk | 1050 | The Canary Islands | 26% |
| 13 July 1607, Not. J. F. Bruyningh (668/29, fol. 163, 164, 222) | Willem Spangert of Gdańsk | "De Romeyn" – "Man from Rome" (140 lasts) | Cornelis Barck and Jan Winter, Gdańsk merchants | ? | Amsterdam–Marseille–Livorno–Genoa–Naples–Sicily–Amsterdam | 26% |
| 17 March 1634, Not. Jan War-naerts (668/29, fol. 222) | Jan Jans Axwÿck | ship 110–115 lasts | Arnout van der Weÿen, Gdańsk merchant | 280 | Norway–France–Amsterdam | ? |
| 21 May 1661, Not. Pieter Capoen (1574, fol. 39); Not. J. v. d. Ven (1137, fol. 227) | Jansen Beats and Douve Jans | "De Swarte Raven" – "Black Crow", the owner – Claes de Waal of Gdańsk | Hendrick Harmeling and Aris Albertsen Snoeck | 8146 | St. Lucas–the Netherlands–Gdańsk–the Netherlands–St. Lucas–the Netherlands–Gdańsk–Amsterdam–Gdańsk | 9% + secured by the goods loaded on the ship |
| | | | Adrian Vallan | 250 | | |
| 24 Feb 1670, Not. F. Tixerandet (3679a, fol. 616) | Andreas Boennick | "Vergulde Salm" – "Golden Salmon" | Abraham Velters | 2400 | Bayonne–Gdańsk | 2,25% |
| | Niclas Willems Backer | "De Eendracht" – "Agreement" | Gijsbert van Susteren | 2400 | Gdańsk–La Rochelle–Gdańsk | 9%, 16% |
| | Jansz. van de Put | "Griffioen" – „Skylark" | Henrique Mathias | 1398, 5 | The Canary Islands–Gdańsk | 2,9% |

The development of economic life, in which sea trade prevailed, required the emergence of the whole insurance system and guarantee, along with the well-developed loans based on the bills of exchange. In the Amsterdam archive, we find numerous authorizations to act on behalf of the patron, partner, spouse, and member of the corporation.⁴⁸ A considerable number of entries refer to bills of exchange.⁴⁹

Despite the fact that they constitute a random collection, the data from the Archive in Amsterdam cast interesting light on Baltic trade in the 17th–18th centuries. The data show that this was not a period of a complete stagnation as it is often believed. It would also be necessary to revise views on the behavior of the magnates and noblemen of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As may be seen here, they manifested considerable activity and economic mobility at that time.

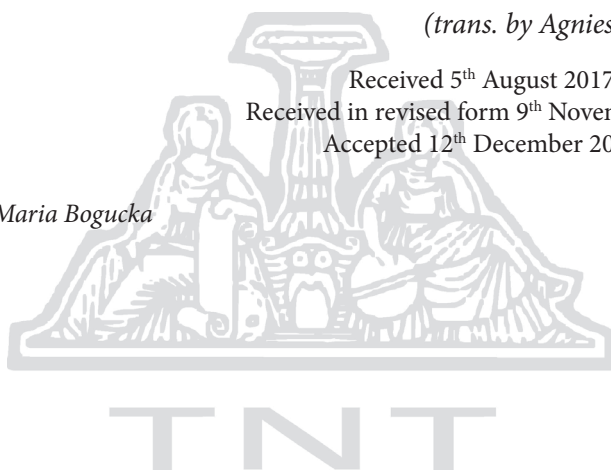
(*trans. by Agnieszka Chabros*)

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⁴⁸ For example: Zuzanna Vogels, the widow of Hans Pelt, cancels the authorization given to Antoni Cuiper and makes the Gdańsk merchant Leon Cambier and the Maseijk (?) merchant her plenipotentiaries (20 Feb 1629), and on 9 Dec 1631 she authorizes Christian Hontman of Gdańsk (GAA, Not. Arch. 787, Not. J. Verhey). Also Herman Keertgens, the Gdańsk merchant, authorized another resident of Gdańsk, Antoni Moens, to purchase good-quality Gdańsk potash. See: *ibid.*, Not. Arch. 664/17, fol. 92, Not. Jan Warnaerts (10 Apr 1640).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Not. Arch. 842, Not. J.C. Hoogenborg (21 Mar 1631); Not. Arch. 842, Not. J. C. Hoogeborn (16 Dec 1631); Not. Arch. 730B/68, Not. P. Carels (17 Jun 1638); Not. Arch. 1609/69, Not. Ed. Pels (19 July 1639); Not. Arch. 1609/448-450, Not. Ed. Pels (31 Jan 1640); Not. Arch. 992, reg. 14, fol. 29, Not. Jan Bosch (16 Jun 1640); Not. Arch. 1695–1111, Not. P. de Bary (19 May 1651). I wrote about bills of exchange and loans in the article based on the materials from the Gdańsk archive, comp. Maria BOGUCKA, *Obrót wekslowo-kredytowy w Gdańsku w pierwszej połowie XVII w.*, Roczniki Dziejów Społeczno-Gospodarczych, vol. 33: 1972, pp. 8–13.

BALTIC SHIPPING IN THE 17TH–18TH CENTURIES
IN THE LIGHT OF THE MATERIALS FROM THE ARCHIVE IN AMSTERDAM

Summary

Key words: Baltic trade in the 17th century, Gdańsk merchants, Dutch merchants, Gdańsk trade, Dutch trade, the Polish-Lithuanian noblemen [szlachta], the Polish-Lithuanian aristocracy in the 17th century, the Polish noblemen and Baltic trade

The article was based on the documents generated in the Notary Office of Amsterdam, which concerned the Polish noblemen's residence in the Netherlands. The analysis of those documents was preceded by the description of the changes in grain trade in the 17th–18th centuries along with their consequences. The article presents the destinations of trade voyages from Gdańsk and the range of products involved in trade. The documents from the Notary Office of Amsterdam concern the fact of Polish noblemen becoming debtors of Dutch merchants. Their debts resulted from trade transactions or costs of their residence. Noblemen attempted to compensate their lower profits from agriculture with the trade activity as merchants. The article includes various examples of such activities conducted despite great risk and various threats. The documentation of the Notary Office of Amsterdam also includes files concerning the income of harbor workers, the record of charges for the shipping of goods presented in tables, letters of attorney, documents concerning promissory notes. The preserved files show that the Polish aristocracy and noblemen were very active economically in the 17th–18th centuries, which caused that there was no standstill in Baltic trade in the period under examination.

TNT
OSTSEESCHIFFFAHRT IM 17. UND 18. JH.
IM LICHT DER UNTERLAGEN AUS DEM AMSTERDAMER ARCHIV

Zusammenfassung

Schlüsselwörter: Ostseehandel des 17. Jh., Danziger Kaufleute, niederländische Kaufleute, Danziger Handel, niederländischer Handel, polnisch-litauischer Adel, polnisch-litauischer Hochadel des 17. Jh., polnischer Adel und der Ostseehandel

Der Inhalt des Artikels stützt sich auf Dokumente, die im Amsterdamer Notariat angefertigt wurden und den Aufenthalt des polnischen Adels in den Niederlanden betreffen. Die Analyse dieser Unterlagen wird von einer summarischen Erörterung der Veränderungen im Getreidehandel im 17. und 18. Jh. sowie ihrer Konsequenzen eingeleitet. Genannt werden die Zielorte der Handelsreisen aus Danzig. Zum Schluss wird auch die Palette der Handelswaren bestimmt. Die Dokumente aus dem Ams-

terdamer Notariat betreffen die Verschuldung der Vertreter des polnischen Adels bei holländischen Kaufleuten. Diese Schulden resultierten aus Handelsgeschäften oder auch aus Aufenthaltskosten. Auffällig ist dabei die Tatsache, dass die Adligen versuchten, gesunkene Gewinne aus dem Ackerbau durch Handelstätigkeit nach dem kaufmännischen Muster zu kompensieren. Es werden zahlreiche Beispiele dieser Tätigkeit angeführt, die trotz eines hohen Risikos und vielfältiger Gefahren ausgeübt wurde. Die Dokumentation des Amsterdamer Notariats beinhaltet auch Akten zur Vergütung von Hafentarifarbeitern, Einträge bzgl. Gebühren für den Schifftransport von Waren in tabellarischer Form, Vollmachten und Dokumente zum Wertpapierverkehr. Die erhalten gebliebenen Unterlagen deuten darauf hin, dass die Vertreter des Adels und Hochadels im 17. und 18. Jh. wirtschaftlich sehr aktiv waren, sowie darauf, dass es im untersuchten Zeitraum im Ostseehandel keinen vollständigen Stillstand gab.

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