

SMRŽ, Pavel, *The Trade Relations between the Hanseatic League, Livonia, Veliky Novgorod and Pskov from the 12th to the early 16th Century*

Abstract

The thesis examines the historical dynamics of interactions between the Livonian state and the Hanseatic League on one side and their eastern counterparts, the cities of Novgorod and Pskov, on the other. The study's temporal scope spans from the 12th century to the early 16th century, respectively through the year 1503. During the 12th century, merchants hailing from Scandinavia and northern German regions initiated initial engagements with medieval Russia and the final treaty, dating from the era of Grand Prince of Moscow Ivan III, was ratified in 1503. This ruler, on one hand, definitively put an end to the political autonomy of Veliky Novgorod, and on the other hand, strengthened the ties between Pskov and Moscow, thereby significantly altering the political conditions in which the two cities coexisted with their Livonian neighbours and trade partners for three centuries.

The author set several objectives in addressing the chosen topic. One of them was to, through content analysis of extensive source material, particularly diplomatic treaty texts, explain how the practical dynamics of relations between Novgorod, Pskov, and their Livonian partners operated, how they evolved over time, and how theoretical provisions of the treaties differed from everyday realities. The starting point of the research was a hypothesis positing that the contract terms represented a compromise reached during negotiations between business partners. This hypothesis proved to be realistic.

Another research assumption was that the relations between Novgorod and Pskov with Livonia were considerably stable, and this stability persisted despite occasional conflicts that arose between merchants on both sides. Here, the author concluded that over time, a specific mechanism of these interactions had been established, which satisfied both German buyers and merchants from Pskov and Novgorod. Therefore, they endeavoured to preserve it. They believed that if this mechanism had proven itself in the past, it would continue to work in the future. Changes, both in contractual terms and in practice, were minimal until Novgorod's annexation to the Grand Duchy of Moscow in the 1570s. According to the author, this event led to a fundamental alteration in the terms of trade for both Novgorod and Pskov with the Hanseatic League, and consequently, a change in its practical functioning. The three-century model of neighbourly coexistence and cooperation became a thing of the past during Ivan III's reign, and Moscow established entirely new rules for its relations with Livonia. This marked

the end of a long era and the beginning of a new one that extends beyond the temporal scope of this work.

Keywords

Veliky Novgorod – Medieval Pskov – Livonia – the Hanseatic League – the Medieval Trade – the Teutonic Order in Livonia – Ivan the Great.