

Foreword

Katre Kaju, Enn Kiing

Pärnu has, through the centuries, been regarded primarily as a trade port. Alongside Riga and Tallinn, Pärnu traditionally welcomed trade with the Hansa people since 1346. Pärnu's importance in the transit trade between the Hanseatic League and Russia decreased rather rapidly during the 14th century, and by the 15th century, Pärnu had evolved to primarily exporting local products. This tendency continued throughout the Swedish and the Russian reigns. In the second half of the 18th century, Pärnu was one of the three most important ports of Estonia; these ports acted as hubs of foreign trade. However, Tallinn, Pärnu and Narva were greatly overshadowed by the ports of Riga and St. Petersburg. In the 1780s, approximately 100-150 ships annually docked at the Port of Tallinn whilst in Pärnu the corresponding figure was 100, and in Narva, less than 100. In contrast, 1000-1200 vessels docked annually in Riga, and the count in St. Petersburg was between 600 and 700 vessels annually. The navigable River Daugava provided Riga with a vast mercantile hinterland, and St. Petersburg's development was supported by the Russian government. Yet, at the end of the 18th and into the early 19th century, Pärnu became one of Estonia's key ports of export supported primarily by the South Estonia hinterland, but also by Central Estonia and North Latvia.

Following the Great Northern War and the plague, Pärnu's population, along with the city's trade, suffered greatly and recovery took a long time. There was a certain revitalisation of Pärnu's trade in the 1730s when the first international trading company was established there, namely Jacob Jacke & Co. (1734?). In 1741, Hans Diedrich Schmidt also founded a mercantile trading house in Pärnu. During the 18th century, Pärnu's long-distance trading was entirely under the control of these two companies. Although Pärnu, as well as the whole of Estonia and Livonia, was governed by Russia at that time, Swedish regulations continued to be applied in trading practise; despite the transfer of authority there were no changes to license and customs taxes. Only by the middle of the 18th century did Russian central authority start to impinge more markedly in Pärnu's economic life. In particular, the following actions of the Russian authorities had an impact on Pärnu's trade:

- In 1754, the export of timber through the ports of Pärnu and Narva was forbidden. This was based on the fear of a timber shortage - what it meant all the shipbuilding industry, and the related rise in prices of the building material. It was only in 1761 that this trade was resumed in Narva, and 1764 in Pärnu.
- In 1763 the export of grain was legalised after a long time, but in 1785 it was again prohibited.
- With the ukase of 27 September 1782, a new customs tariff was introduced, which abolished internal customs barriers throughout the whole of Russia; until then, lower customs limits had been in force in the Baltic region.

The arrangement of Pärnu's trade was closely connected with Riga's trade. Remarks in Pärnu's customs books testify to the fact that local goods moving between Riga and Pärnu were exempt from the customs duty. Nevertheless, specific customs limits were in effect in each of the two towns. In 1747, for example, Pärnu's merchants complained about the extremely high license customs that were primarily imposed on certain fabrics, and sought to equalise the taxes with those of Riga. They rationalised their wish with the belonging to the same Guberniya and partly with the identical laws valid both in Pärnu

and Riga (EAA 1000-1-3646, fol. 5-7 verso). Consequently, in 1765, trade regulations were issued for Riga in St. Petersburg. The appendix of these regulations contained the customs limits for both export and import products (Der Stadt Riga Handels-Ordnung).

Although by this time Pärnu's trade situation had improved when compared with the period of the Great Northern War, local merchants were still not satisfied. In 1761, in order to further improve the situation, Pärnu City Council sent a letter of notification that included the following suggestions to the Senate of Russia (EAA 1000-1-3693, fol. 1 and fol. 6-47):

- Free timber export;
- Free trade of Russian products that required the re-establishment of Pärnu-Tartu waterway;
- Dredging of Pärnu's roadstead;
- Forbidding of pre-emption in the countryside;
- Reopening of the university in Pärnu.

The timber export from Pärnu was reinstated in 1764, mostly due to the support of the Livonian Governor-General, George von Browne. Browne believed that it was the timber trade that could restore Pärnu's earlier prosperity. Pärnu was especially involved in the export of rough sawn wooden boards. The idea of making the Pärnu-Tartu waterway navigable arose as early as the 1630s, then again in the 1650s, the 1680s, the 1760s, etc. This issue was addressed time and time again until the early 20th century, but navigation of the waterway was not realised for several reasons.

With the intent of increasing the city's revenues, Pärnu also tried to regulate its trading activities to some extent. In April 1765, Pärnu City Council proposed a project to more effectively fill the city's treasury as it was in severe debt (EAA 1000-1-2542, fol. 1-4). The project included the following proposals:

- In calculating customs duties, an exchange rate of 1 taler = 90 kopecks *courant* should be applied - there is little indication in customs journals about the actual exchange rate of the taler and the ruble. In 1780, for example, an exchange rate of 143 kopecks for one albertus-taler was used (EAA 1000-2-1431, fol. 146);
- An additional customs duty should be imposed - as a result of this proposal, and with the approval of the Great Guild's members, an additional customs duty of 25% was imposed for ten years (*Anlage, Zuschlag*);
- Ships docking in the port should be taxed: 5 kopecks for every ship's cargo (*Schiffslast*) - this tax, too, was imposed for ten years;
- An additional customs duty on beer and spirits (*Faß oder Land Brandwein*) should be imposed;
- The pier tax (*Brücken-Gelder*) should be increased from the existing 4 kopecks to 10 kopecks for a ship's cargo; in addition, a pilot tax of 50 kopecks for the each foot of the loaded ship's draught was imposed;
- An increase the fee of weighing was introduced;
- The building of a guest house was proposed.

Decisions regarding this taxation are reflected in Pärnu city customs books.

The Estonian Historical Archives houses the customs books of the Ports of Tallinn, Narva and Pärnu from the 17th-19th centuries; from this collection, Pärnu city customs

books are now available via the Internet. The fonds of the Estonian Governor-General of the Swedish period preserved Tallinn's customs books (*Pfundzollbücher*) from 1609-1639 (EAA 1-2-764....774, 776). The same fonds also contains materials that touch upon the activities of grain customs and the License Chamber from 1630-1645 (EAA 1-2-867....881). The archive of the Narva Magistrate contains Narva's customs books from 1640-1703 (EAA 1646-1-1073, 1074, 1083, 1086; EAA 1646-2-342....354). The latter fonds also houses one of Tallinn's customs books from 1646 (EAA 1646-1-803). The materials associated with Pärnu's customs are to be found in the fonds of the Livonian Governor-General of the Swedish period and of the Pärnu Magistrate. The fonds of Livonian Governor-General of the Swedish period contains materials of the Livonian, Estonian and Ingria's Licence Chambers from 1638-1704 (EAA 278-1-XXII:139....160). The fonds of the Pärnu Magistrate holds materials of Pärnu city customs from 1764, 1766-1782 (EAA 1000-2-1395....1433), *Schiffsrollen* from 1751-1775 (EAA 1000-2-1434....1455), and materials regarding the export of flax, hemp, tow and grain, and the import of salt from 1803-1876 (EAA 1000-2-5465....5470).

Pärnu city customs books from the second half of the 18th century, as retained in the fonds of Pärnu Magistrate, include some rather detailed information of the exports and imports conducted through the Port of Pärnu over the 20-year period from 1764, to 1782 (excluding 1765). In Pärnu, instead of "city customs" (*Stadtzoll*), the term "additional customs" (*Zulage-Zoll*) was generally used. The journals of the city customs, except from the year 1764, consist of two parts: the so-called main journal, and the additional journal. The main journal contains the following data: name of the ship's owner, ship's starting point and destination, name of the cargo's owner, and, frequently, the shortened list of transported goods. For some goods, the monetary value has also been indicated; this is true mostly for albertus- or state talers; customs duty, however, is calculated in rubles. The additional journals are more voluminous than the main journals, and include consolidated reports on the ships' parameters, crew, cargo, and the detailed reports by the owners of the goods imported or, after 1777, exported. Some additional journals also offer information about actual people, primarily craftsmen, who arrived in Pärnu by sea.

Besides the city customs journals, additional important information of Pärnu's trade comes from the archives of the two large trading houses: Jacob Jacke & Co and H. D. Schmidt (EAA, funds 3339 and 3340). These two archives hold information on the two companies' trading partners locally, in Western Europe and in Russia, as well as information on the importation and exportation of goods, etc.

To this day, there are no comprehensive overviews of Pärnu's trade, but trading issues have been addressed in several studies. Pärnu's customs books have been studied mainly from the vantage point of trading history. Helmut Piirimäe, for instance, has analysed the customs books from the end of the 17th century in the article "Pärnu kaubanduse suurus ja koostis XVII saj. lõpul" [The capacity and the composition of Pärnu's trade at the end of the 17th century], which was published in the collection *Eesti ajaloo küsimusi V* [Issues of Estonian history V] in 1968. The subject of Pärnu's timber export at the end of the 17th century is addressed by Enn Küng in his article "Pärnu metsakaubandusest 17. sajandi viimasel veerandil" [On Pärnu's timber trade in the last quarter of the 17th century] in the collection *Pärnumaa ajalugu, artiklite kogumik 2* [History of Pärnumaa, collection of articles 2] (Pärnu 2000). Several diploma studies on Pärnu's trade in the 18th-19th centuries, guided by Helmut Piirimäe, have been conducted at the University of Tartu: Toe Nõmm, "Pärnu kaubandus Prantsuse keisririigi sõdade perioodil" [Pärnu's trade during the period of wars of the French empire] (Tartu 1977); Olaf Multer, "Pärnu linna kaubandus XVIII sajandi

60.-70. aastail" [The trade of Pärnu city in the 1760s-1770s] (Tartu 1979); Ene Remmelgas, "Pärnu kaubandus XIX sajandi 20.-30. aastail" [Pärnu's trade in the 1820s-1830s] (Tartu 1980; later published as the article in the collection *Uurimusi Läänemere maade ajaloost IV* [Studies on the history of the Baltic Sea countries IV], Tartu 1987); Kaupo Ahuna, "Pärnu kaubandus 18. sajandi lõpul" [Pärnu's trade at the end of the 18th century] (Tartu 1981); Tiina Kallas "Pärnu kaubandus aastail 1770-90" [Pärnu's trade in 1770-1790] (Tartu 1991). Unfortunately, the studies of Olaf Multer and Kaupo Ahuna are lost, but the rest are kept in the Department of History of the University of Tartu. The study by K. Ahuna has been used in compiling the collection *Merelinn Pärnu* [Sea City Pärnu, Pärnu 1998].

Pärnu's trade has also received general attention in several studies on the history of Pärnu: Richard Hausmann, "Studien zur Geschichte der Stadt Pernau" (Tartu 1906); Heinrich Laakmann, "Geschichte der Stadt Pernau in der Deutsch-Ordenszeit (bis 1558)" (Marburg/Lahn 1956); Rolf Diedrich Schmidt, "Pernau: Eine livländische Hafenstadt" (Essen 1986); Jüri Kivimäe, Aivar Kriiska, Inna Põltsam, Aldur Vunk, "Merelinn Pärnu" [Sea City Pärnu] (Pärnu 1998). Furthermore, "Eesti majanduslugu" ("Estonia's economic history", Tartu 1937) pays some attention to Pärnu's trade. Katre Kaju's introductory article "Pernauer Zulage-Journale 1764-1782. Einige Aspekte der Schifffahrt und des Seehandels" in the collection *Städtesystem und Urbanisierung im Ostseeraum in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin 2006) deals with Pärnu city customs journals.

While studying Pärnu city customs journals and interpreting the data in them, one should also focus on the trade textbooks and manuals of that time. Regarding the textbooks, we should specifically point out books published in Pärnu's neighbouring cities of Tallinn and Riga: Johann Daniel Intelmann, "Arithmetischer Wegweiser, oder nach Ehst- und Liefländischer Handlung gründlich eingerichtetes erstes Revalsches Rechenbuch" (Halle 1736) and J. H. Flor, "Das Rigische Rechenbuch" (Riga 1769). Among the manuals of note is Carl Günther Ludovici's "Eröffnete Akademie der Kaufleute, oder vollständiges Kaufmanns-Lexicon I-V" (Leipzig 1767-17682), but also A. Schlessing's "Handels-Artikel des Weltverkehrs nebst den darauf bezüglichen technischen und Kaufmännischen Bezeichnungen" (Vienna 1883) and Philipp Andreas Nemnich's "Waaren-Lexikon in Zwölf Sprachen der Hamburgischen Commerz-Deputation zugeeignet" (Hamburg 1797) should be recognised. The dictionary by Wilhelm von Gutzeit ("Wörtertschatz der Deutschen Sprache Livlands", Riga 1874-1898) can also be of great help.