Nowadays, most residents of Latvia have positive or at least neutral associations with the name “Hansa”. Hardly anyone is surprised to see this name on signboards of Latvian enterprises, for example, Hansa hotel, bakery, wine gallery or beauty parlour. The name is also used by logistics companies and tile traders, and even by a secondary school located in the centre of Rīga. Additionally, medieval festivals and markets in Latvia are organised under the sign of the Hanseatic League. Rīga and other Latvian towns, such as Cēsis, Koknese, Kuldīga, Limbaži, Straupe, Valmiera, and Ventspils tend to pride themselves on the participation in the Hanseatic League. In short, people see the name of Hansa a lot, but what do the people who use this name today know about the historical Hanseatic League?

1. HANSEATIC LEAGUE

The Earlier and Current Understanding of the Nature of the Hanseatic League

A person who is not familiar with scientific literature on medieval history is likely to answer the aforementioned question as follows: a mighty political union of German towns with the goal of ensuring their dominance in trade in the North Sea and Baltic Sea regions using their shared privileges. This explanation was generally accepted for a long time, it is
still used in popular publications\(^1\) and reference literature\(^2\), although recent historical research offers another definition of the Hanseatic League.\(^3\)

Interpretation of the nature of the Hanseatic League has changed because historians have recently been studying it not only as a participant of political events, but also from the perspective of economic and social history. In the latest literature, the Hanseatic League is analysed and described not as much as a league of towns (namely, from the territorially political aspect), but from the perspective of merchants and their economic interests. In contradistinction to the earlier interpretations, nowadays it is emphasized that the Hanseatic League did not unite towns per se, but instead united merchants living there, who joined their forces to obtain privileges and protect them overseas. Thus, when referring to the Hanseatic League, one should talk not so much about a community of towns, but a community of merchants, that is, persons. It is also noted that the Hanseatic League did not have unitary features, namely, it did not have a formal unifying contract, legal base regulating its operations or strict admission criteria. Thus, the nature of the Hanseatic League is better characterised by more general terms, such as “organisation”, “association of interests”, “group”, etc., rather than “union”.\(^4\)

The most recent literature also notes that it would be inappropriate to associate the Hanseatic League only with Germany and the Germans (although some medieval sources include the expression dudeshe Hanse or German Hansa) since it had a pan-European dimension. Merchants with a different ethnic origin also had an active role in the Hanseatic trade, especially in the early period, although there is no doubt that the tone in the Hanseatic League was set by Low German merchants (people of Northern and Central Germany, as well as Prussia and Livonia). The trade network established in the 12th to 15th centuries included merchants from around 200 towns in the North Sea region, Baltic Sea region and Central Europe. Geographically, one should picture the Hanseatic region as lands stretching from the eastern Dutch towns to Stockholm in Scandinavia, Tartu in Estonia, and Krakow in Poland. Regardless of the fact that Hanseatic towns were located far from each other and subjected to different seigniors, their burgomasters and town councillors managed to agree upon coordinated trade policies, both in the broad region, as well as in relations with partners

outside the Hanseatic League. The four most important Kontors or posts (supporting points) – London in England, Bergen in Norway, Bruges in Flanders and Novgorod in Russia – were located abroad, outside the Hanseatic region. All in all, Hanseatic trade expansion covered most of Europe from Portugal to the north of Scandinavia and from the northwest of Russia to Italy. This area included 25 of 46 modern European countries. At the same time, however, one should bear in mind that in spite of the desire of modern politicians and some journalists to portray the Hanseatic League as a transnational unifier of Europe and, in this sense, predecessor of the European Union (historians do not hide their scepticism towards this point of view), the Hanseatic League, was primarily a commercial, not a political association, and it mostly united Low German merchants; however, it was not in the sense of nationality, which is characteristic of the present day, but due to the community of language, traditions, and law.⁵

**Medieval Hanseatic League**

It is self-evident for a modern man to live in a world where various associations, societies and organisations define themselves. Usually they have articles of association formulating their goals or they are able to explain these goals. When forming unions, obligations and rights of the members are precisely defined and documented in writing. Despite the fact that many people consider the Middle Ages to be the age of anarchy and lawlessness, order in many areas at that time was maintained by norms formulated in writing. Corporations, guilds, and brotherhoods had regulations, kings and towns passed laws, while the Church had a specific canon law. By contrast, the Hanseatic League had neither regulations, nor a common treasury, seal, coat of arms, nor any other symbol. There was not even a list of the members of this organisation.⁶

So let us return to the question – what was the Hanseatic League? This questions was raised officially at least once, in the 15th century, and a specific answer was given. The need to define the nature of the Hanseatic League arose after Danish corsairs robbed English merchants ships in the summer of 1468. English authorities considered that the Hanseatic League is at least partly to blame for the offence. In response to the incident, King Edward IV ordered to arrest Hanseatic merchants in England and seize their goods, so as to compensate

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⁶ JAHNKE. Hanse, pp. 7–8.
for the losses caused to the English. The King had no doubt that he had a legal right to do so because he believed that the Hanseatic League is a corporation whose members are collectively responsible for the deeds of some of its members. Hanseatic merchants, in an attempt to resolve the conflict through legal action, challenged the legal basis of the King’s actions (reference to the obligation of joint responsibility) and lawfulness of the seizure of goods. That was when the King of England’s Council demanded an explanation on the nature of the Hanseatic League. Syndic (paid lawyer) of the Lübeck town council Johannes Oosthuizen was entrusted with the preparation of the response in 1469. In an effort to prove that the Hanseatic League members are not bound by material obligations towards each other, Oosthuizen formulated its members’ understanding of themselves: “German Hansa is not a society (societas), since the goods therein are shared neither in whole nor in part, and it does not recognize community of goods. It is also not a societas for specific trade transactions, since transactions in German Hansa are concluded by each person them self, and any profits and losses affect each person [individually]. (..) It is also not a collegium, since the law refers to a collegium as a cluster that covers a whole, but German Hansa, as specified in the King’s order, is made up of towns that are located far away from each other. (..) It is also not a universitas, since both the civil law and canon law prescribe that a community deserving the name of a universitas must have a common property, common defence, common seal, common syndic and common clerk, but German Hansa has none of that. (..)

German Hansa is (..) a close confederation (confederatio) of many towns, places, and communities, which aims to ensure successful trade operations (..) on water and land (..) and to achieve an effective protection against pirates. (..) German Hansa also does not have a common town council, but each town sends authorised messengers [to meetings], who are referred to as envoys rather than town councillors. (..) If there are issues to be discussed and a mutual agreement to be reached, envoys of the Hanseatic towns meet at a specific venue and discuss and decide on what is considered appropriate for their merchants.”

So if the English statesmen, like many people today, considered the Hanseatic League to be a close union, whose members are bound by mutual obligations, the members of the Hanseatic League thought of themselves and portrayed themselves as a formation, where merchants, towns and communities maintained a broad autonomy. Oosthuizen noted that the Hanseatic League lacks the characteristics of a union – it was just an association of very poorly interconnected towns and communities. Thus, even contemporaries of the Hanseatic League encountered difficulties with defining the nature of the Hanseatic League using the

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7 PÜHLE. Hanse, pp. 37.
existing legal categories, since it was not similar to any other organizational structures known in the Middle Ages.

There is no doubt that the Hanseatic League was a graphic proof of increase in the role of merchants in the political and economic life of Northern Europe, as town dwellers became the third major force in medieval world, in addition to nobility and clergy. But it was difficult to integrate a merchant organisation in the hierarchically organised medieval society where the last word belonged to the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and the Pope, and the order of things was established by the Church, secular rulers and noblemen. Even for the modern man, it is not easy to understand its nature.

**The Hanseatic League as an Association of Merchants and Towns**

Historical Hanseatic League resembles a group of merchants interested in obtaining trade privileges and undisturbed process of trade rather than a monolithic union. The majority of members of this group was made up of rich long-distance merchants, many of whom also held the office of burgomasters and town councillors at their town councils. Business and family ties linked them to other wealthy and influential merchants both locally and in other Hanseatic towns. This rich merchant elite set up a joint trade network and ensured coherent trade throughout the Hanseatic region, based on the same principles. The association also acquired trading privileges in foreign markets, namely, neighbouring territories of the Hanseatic economic area – Russia, Lithuania, Denmark, Flanders, England, Norway, etc. Thanks to the aforementioned advantages, the Hanseatic League became an important factor in the North Sea trading region and had a dominant role in the Baltic Sea region trade from the 13th to the 15th century. However, reducing the Hanseatic activities to trade alone, its description would not be complete. The territorial expansion of the Hanseatic League was surprisingly broad, and although the Hanseatic League did not resemble a state-like formation it also became a powerful political force, reckoned with by rulers across the Northern Europe in the late Middle Ages.

Interests of the Hanseatic long-distance merchant elite were represented and defended by town burgomasters and town councillors, who used their authority, connections and influence, as well as the town’s administrative, economic and political resources to achieve

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10 PUHLE. Die Hanse, p. 38.
the association’s economic goals. In this regard, the Hanseatic League can be considered an association of merchants and towns. This point is reflected in the latest definition of the Hanseatic League by Rolf Hammel-Kiesow that gained recognition among other researchers of the history of the Hanseatic League.\textsuperscript{11} Hammel-Kiesow described the Hanseatic League in the first half of the 15th century as an association, “which, on the one hand, was made up of Low German merchants and, on the other hand, of 70 large and about 100–130 small towns where these merchants enjoyed civil rights.”\textsuperscript{12} He also notes that the Hanseatic League was an economic and political body, thus an association of merchants and towns at the same time.

2. PERIODS IN THE HISTORY OF THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE

The Hanseatic League did not form by itself and in a vacuum, so in order to understand its specific nature, it is necessary to focus on the historical evolution of this institution.

*Early Hanseatic League (from the 12th century to the mid-14th century)*

The word “Hansa” has several meanings, and the meaning changed during the Middle Ages. Initially, the most common meaning of the word could be interpreted as a “crowd”, “group”, or “cluster”.\textsuperscript{13} In the first centuries of the Middle Ages, the word “hansa” was used to refer to a variety of groups, in which merchants voluntarily joined together while staying abroad to support and protect each other, working together to achieve the best possible trading conditions. They were bound by a mutual oath of allegiance and obligation to take care of their common interests. There was no specific German accent to these formations. Historians also refer to such structures (with elders, membership fees, meetings, and rites to commemorate the dead) as guilds. During the 12th–13th century, there were several such guilds/Hansas in Norther Europe – Cologne merchant association for trips to Denmark, merchants going from Soest to Schleswig, etc. Merchants from Denmark, Cologne, Lübeck and Hamburg also formed separate groups in London.\textsuperscript{14} They were not interrelated.

From the end of the 11th century to the mid-14th century, several parallel factors resulted in changes that led to the concept of “Hansa” being narrowed down, and people started using this word to refer to Low German merchants. Firstly, a number of German towns (Cologne, Soest, etc.) became important trading centres with a significant concentration of capital and far-reaching connections even to England and Russia. Secondly, since the mid-12th century, German sovereign princes and crusaders subjected extensive areas populated by Slavic, Baltic and Finno-Ugric people on the southern and eastern coast of the Baltic Sea.

\textsuperscript{11} PUHLE. p. 39; SELZER, Die mittelalterliche Hanse, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{12} HAMELS-KĪZOVS, Hanza, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{13} HENN, Was war die Hanse?, p. 16. See also other meanings of “Hansa”.
\textsuperscript{14} SELZER. Die mittelalterliche Hanse, pp. 25–28.
region, and Western European-type towns were established in the territory from Holstein to Estonia, where the merchants coming from the West settled and took the dominant position. This process was reflected, for example, by the agreement of 1229 signed between the Prince of Smolensk, and Low German merchants, with merchants from Gotland, Lübeck, Soest, Munster, Groningen, Dortmund, Bremen, and Riga mentioned as witnesses in the text of the agreement.\(^1\)

Thirdly, with the spread of Christianity and a significant increase in the number of believers, the demand for wax (for candle making), dried and salted fish (for consumption during fasting) grew manifold. There was a sharp increase in trade between the East and the West also in other, exclusive and essential goods (fur, fabrics, salt, etc.). This led to a closer integration of Western Europe and the Baltic Sea region. New profit opportunities opened up for western merchants, and they expanded their economic activity towards the East. The newly established towns and the towns built by Low German merchants in the Baltic Sea region (Lübeck, Rostock, Stralsund, Visby, Danzig, Elbing, Riga, Tallinn, Tartu, etc.) took on a mediating role in trade between Northern Europe, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe.\(^2\)

The biggest winner of the changes was Lübeck – the first Western European-type town on the coast of the Baltic Sea, founded in 1159 by the Duke of Saxony Henry the Lion in Wagria, inhabited by Slavic people, after the previous settlement was burned down. The advantage of this town was its convenient location on the coast of the Baltic Sea (and thus good shipping eastwards) and close connection with domestic markets of Westphalia and Saxony. At first, merchants of Lübeck (and merchants of other Low German towns via the port of Lübeck) strengthened their positions in Gotland, but at the end of the 12th century and in the first half of the 13th century also in Novgorod and the lower reaches of the River Daugava with the help of local islanders. Next, moving up along this river, they were able to expand trade towards Polotsk and Smolensk. At the same time, merchants of Lübeck and other Low German merchants from the Baltic Sea region intensely sought access to the western markets of Flanders, England, and Norway since the 13th century. There they had to compete with other merchants, including Low German merchants of the oldest towns of the Holy Roman Empire – Cologne, Dortmund, Munster, etc. Later on, Low German merchants found a common cause and merged their diplomatic political resources to achieve more favourable trading conditions. Privileges were requested from local rulers that would be applied to all “merchants of the Roman Empire”, namely, all Low German merchants. Low German merchants from various towns gradually consolidated more and more and established


their posts (Kontors) in major foreign trade centres – in London, Bruges, Bergen, and Novgorod – with extraterritorial status, charters, management, and buildings. In case of new rulers and due to other reasons, re-approval of privileges was required from time to time, and at the same time possible ways of expanding them were sought. Various means were used for these purposes, including even the trade embargo. During one such large-scale conflict in 1358–1360, councillors of the towns interested in trade with Flanders started using the term dudesche hense – German Hansa – to express the collective strength of united towns, to name themselves and use it as a mark of political propaganda.\(^{17}\) It can be assumed that formation of the Hanseatic League was finished around this time and the early stage of its history was over. At the same time, one should bear in mind that, according to Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, “The Hanseatic League was not established in 1358. Rather, the group of towns that had existed for a long time took a common name due to the circumstances of that time in order to emphasize its (extremely delicate) unity within the group and in contact with the outside world.”\(^{18}\) Karsten Jahnke has the same opinion: “1358 was not the year of birth of the Hanseatic League. Only the idea of the possible existence of common interest was born and the name for expression of this thought was found.”\(^{19}\)

**Organisation of the Hanseatic League and its Activities during its Heyday (in the mid-14th century to the 15th century)**

With trade expanding, the cooperation of Low German merchants became closer not only abroad but also domestically. Town councillors and burgomasters of the same region started organising meetings (Städtetage) to discuss significant long-distance trade and local trade problems, as well as political issues. Separate regional groups gradually emerged in the Hanseatic League – towns of the Rhineland, Westphalia, Saxony, Vends (conquered lands of northwest Slavs), Prussia and Livonia. In addition to the regional meetings that specialized more in dealing with local challenges, comprehensive Hanseatic meetings (Hansetage) were organised since 1358. Their participants – burgomasters and town councillors authorised by their towns – dealt with current issues within the range of economic activities of all Low German merchants (trade regulation and organisation, conflict resolution, etc.). This does not mean that the Hanseatic League became a union of towns. The aim of the Hanseatic meetings was to balance the wishes of different towns and merchant groups and find solutions that

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18 HAMELS-KĪZOVS. Hanza, p. 62.
19 JAHNKE. Hanse, pp. 52.
would be acceptable for everyone, no matter how difficult and sometimes nearly impossible it was to find a common denominator for the individual, group and collective interests.\textsuperscript{20}

The Hanseatic League was not a hierarchical organisation – all the participants of the meetings were equal on legal terms and decisions in the meetings were adopted according to principles of voluntary participation and consensus. The core of the Hanseatic League was made up of Vends’ towns and some towns close to them that were most interested in organised trade throughout the wide Hanseatic economic area. The rest of the towns were either neutral towards decisions that did not relate to them or tried to avoid participation in the making of such decisions, especially when the issue was a difficult one. In such case, the simplest solution was not to attend the meeting of the Hanseatic League, because for those, who did not participate in the decision-making process, the particular decision was not binding. As a result, for example, over 50 years after 1358 only 20\% of the Hanseatic meetings were attended by more than 20 town representatives, but in 40\% of cases, the number of representatives was less than ten. If an agreement was reached, it was recorded in an official document, the so-called Recess, the copies of which were delivered to town councils by delegates. Decisions taken entered into force only after approval thereof at the relevant town council. If the town council members believed that a decision did not meet the interests of the town, the decision was not taken into account. There were no direct sanctions for failure to appear for a meeting or for refusing to approve the decisions taken at the meeting.\textsuperscript{21}

Hanseatic meetings most often took place in Lübeck or another town of the Vends, and they were attended only by ambassadors of the largest towns actively involved in long-distance trade. Smaller towns were not able to send their delegates primarily due to high costs, and the participation would not pay off, since a large part of the issues discussed at Hanseatic meetings did not affect the small towns directly. Their interests were represented by the major regional centres, who later, depending on the necessity, informed the town councils of small towns about common decisions of the Hanseatic League. At best, the small towns sent their delegates to regional meetings. Thus, the importance of small towns in the Hanseatic League,


\textsuperscript{21} HAMELS-KĪZOVS. Hanza, pp. 67–72; SELZER, Die mittelalterliche Hanse, pp. 59–60; JAHNKE, Hanse, p. 124.
including the small Latvian towns mentioned at the beginning of the text, should not be exaggerated. They should be described as passive members of the Hanseatic League. Small towns backed the economy of the larger towns, while remaining in their shadow in both economic and political terms. However, although small towns did not have any foreign policy ambitions, it was important for their merchants to be aware of trade rules, standards of the quality of goods, weights, and measures, and other issues that affected economic activities of all persons involved in trade. Thus, merchants of small towns were integrated into the Hanseatic trade and information network and benefited from it. Therefore, they sometimes supported common Hanseatic foreign policy measures (such as paying the tax when sea towns engaged in war with the King of Denmark in the 14th century), as well as partially covered the costs of ambassador delegations of larger cities when they travelled to common Hanseatic meetings.22

Decline of the Hanseatic League (in the 16th and 17th century)

Starting from the second half of the 15th century, the Baltic Sea and the North Sea regions gradually lost the characteristics of a single economic space. Centralised monarchies strengthened their positions and their rulers began to consistently restrict foreigner privileges and support local merchants. The Hanseatic League had to struggle against the ever-increasing competition of English, Dutch, and Southern German traders. Moreover, with increasing interest in trade with Africa and India, and especially after the discovery of the new world, the main trade route directions changed since the 16th century and goods were exchanged on a much larger scale. Due to the organisational specifics of the Hanseatic League, it had no chance in this global competitive struggle. It remained a regional player (albeit on a large scale). In the 16th century, Lübeck tried to change the organisational model of the Hanseatic League, making it similar to a union with centralised management, but this idea did not gain much support.23

The Hanseatic League was a voluntary association of Low German merchants without a strong framework. None of the group members could be forced to act against their will, and towns got involved only in the Hanseatic activities that were beneficial to their traders. Due to changes in mutual advantages, the Hanseatic League fell to pieces. Interests of particular Hanseatic regions and merchant groups were coming to the forefront, and disagreements between them grew. It became increasingly difficult to implement a common trade policy

within the framework of the Hanseatic League. One by one, towns discontinued to send their envoys to common Hanseatic meetings (for example, delegates of Livonian towns stopped attending them in the middle of the 16th century). The historic Hanseatic core around Lübeck remained intact longer. The last Hanseatic meeting, attended by delegates of only six towns, was convened in Lübeck in 1669. This year may be referred to as the end of the Hanseatic League.\textsuperscript{24}

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE

The Hanseatic League was a unique formation, having no analogues in the history of the Middle Ages. There is no other example of so many towns and merchants voluntarily joining together in a single organisation for several centuries. Hanseatic trade relations stretched across borders and, in spite of the need to constantly coordinate all association members’ interests and the difficulties to accept decisions that would be advantageous for everyone, the Hanseatic trade system turned out to be surprisingly effective and sustainable. Its advantage and key to success was a network of well-informed merchants, which included both the relatives and trading partners from the hometown, and merchants from surrounding towns, and partners from far away.

In the 21st century, Hansa has become a symbol of prosperity, stability, benefits of economic cooperation and contacts between people of different countries – one of the positive lessons of history that still attracts people’s interest about this medieval phenomenon.

\textsuperscript{24} POSTEL. Niedergang, p. 192.
4. LIFE IN A MEDIEVAL TOWN

If it was possible to travel in time, residents of medieval Valmiera or any other medieval town would not recognise their hometown now. The streets are wide, there is light everywhere, information travels with amazing speed, and there is a single monetary system.25 The only thing that remains in its place, but certainly looks different, is the St. Simon’s Church and the Order’s castle. Everything else has changed – people, architecture, culture, food, fashion, and entertainment. Everything is different now. However, we have to thank the living space created in the Middle Ages for a large part of characteristics of the modern urban life and society.

Medieval towns in Western Europe formed slowly since the 5th century, but only during the 10th–11th century may one speak of a new way of life characteristic to a town. Its main features include a non-agrarian economy, market orientation, living space protected by walls with concentrated set of buildings, and autonomous commune with its own rights and self-government. In the territory of Latvia, Middle Ages started no sooner than at the turn of the 12th-13th centuries26, and we may talk about emergence of towns within the meaning of Western Europe in this region only from the beginning of the 13th century, when Crusades were extended against the pagan Baltic lands. The territories were conquered and settlements, castles, and later towns, were built there after the Western European cultural space.27

Unlike Western European countries, where a town and its community took shape gradually, towns in the territory of Latvia had a particular structure and function from the very beginning. However, it should be noted that there are relatively few studies about the role of towns, especially small towns, and social life therein.28 A classic German town was taken as an example for towns that were formed as a result of conquests of Livonian Brothers of the Sword and later conquests of the Teutonic Order. Consequently, communities of these towns

28 INNA JÜRJO-PÕLTSAM. Grundzüge des livländischen Städtewesens im Mittelalter. In: HEIDI HEIN – KIRCHER; ILGVARS MISĀNS (Hgg.). Stadtgeschichte des Baltikums oder baltische Stadtgeschichte? Annäherungen an ein neues Forschungsfeld zur baltischen Geschichte. Marburg 2015, pp. 117–135, here p. 118; “There are more than 100 castles and fortifications surrounded by walls in the province of Livonia, to which castle settlements are connected. There are nine towns with a brick wall: Riga, Tallinn, Pärnu, Narva, Cēsis, Valmiera, Koknese, Viljandi, Tartu.” (Dionīsija Fabrīcija Livonijas vēsture / Dionysii Fabricii Livonicae Historiae. Translated and commented by ĖVALDS MUGURĒVIČS. Rīga 2016, p. 31).
in many ways reminded German communities living in towns, plus most of the initial town-dwellers in the territory of Latvia were Germans.²⁹

A town was characterised by such buildings as church, town hall, wall, port, and market square, which was the town’s central venue. With the development of the Hanseatic League, towns obtained further nuances characteristic to the Hanseatic cultural environment. Most towns in the territory of Latvia were under the authority of the Order, so, in their deepest essence, they were under the authority of a spiritual leader. The fact that Valmiera was a member of the Hanseatic League influenced relations of other levels, not only the relations of the Pope and the Order. Mutual relations of Brothers of the Order, merchants, craftsmen, and the town council³⁰ were important; it is believed that, as of the 14th century, they were the status group representatives who dictated the terms in Valmiera. For a town to function successfully, a mechanical population was required, which in Western Europe was mainly formed by former farmers. In case of Valmiera, no data is available on whether there were many local people among townspeople, because, as evidenced by the burials around the Simon’s Church, there are few traces of paganism, which can be usually found in rural or smaller urban areas. Of course, it could also be explained in other ways – “burial in the town centre was usually held under strict supervision of a clergyman; the town was inhabited by German or people of other nationalities, who were unfamiliar with local pagan rituals, or, quite simply, nobles were buried in the church ground, who were firm believers.”³¹ Another possibility – while living in an urban environment, pagan traditions could be unfamiliar to or forgotten by the local population. In addition to the indigenous inhabitants, in towns, there were also representatives of different status groups, pilgrims, crusaders, monks-knights, artisans, mercenaries, thieves, doctors, the poor, heretics, sailors, fishermen, judges, intellectuals, and minstrels (spēlmaņi). It is impossible to say specifically which of these people resided permanently in medieval Valmiera; according to the analogies of the Western Europe’s urban society and chronicles devoted to Rīga³², it is believed that all of them could be found there from time to time. An interesting nuance of the medieval society of Valmiera was mentioned by Wilhelm Heine. “[..], when masters and bishops ruled the old Vidzeme. At
that time, the nobles of the land often gathered within the walls of Valmiera for common discussions to make decisions at times of both prosperity and suffering of their native land. Even more often, Valmiera gave refuge to representatives of the Hanseatic League so that they could pursue their interests on their widely branched long-distance trade routes. However, it was a long time ago when people within the strong ramparts and walls formed a society, which could not be denied a certain independence even in their attitude towards the mighty of the land.”\(^{33}\) It is impossible to specify what the author meant by independence of the people of Valmiera. Nor is there any reference to the author’s source of information. Further on in the text he writes that, despite the many attacks that affected Valmiera, “the tenacity of its people and love of the native land always won.”\(^{34}\)

Important role in the formation of Valmiera’s society was also played by the fact that there were a lot of different nations in the town – the Russians, Poles, Germans, Lithuanians, as well as local Latgallians and Livonians, Swedes, and Danes – from the 13th to the 17th century. This is evidenced by the wide range of coins found in the excavations in the town and castle.\(^ {35}\) The largest share belonged to Germans, however, it can not be denied that other nationalities – Poles in the 16th century and Swedes in the 17th century – also had a certain influence when the town became the property of Lord High Chancellor of Sweden Axel Oxenstierna, thanks to whom a bull’s forehead is depicted on the flag of Valmiera.\(^ {36}\)

4.1. SOCIETY AND ITS STRUCTURE

Town community was very diverse, but every member thereof was related to the market and trade.\(^ {37}\) For a modern man, it is very difficult to understand the medieval man who was very faithful, with a peculiar perception of the world formed by their status group, living space, and the area where they lived. We find it obvious that people live in urban areas, but no more than 10% of people lived in towns in the Middle Ages. The rest of the people lived in castles, villages, or monasteries.\(^ {38}\) “However, towns were swarmed with people. Society that produced and traded, trapped inside small rooms, narrow streets, walls.”\(^ {39}\) It is undeniable that towns in the territory of Latvia were different from towns in Germany even if for no other


\(^{34}\) Ibidem.


\(^{36}\) HEINE. Senā Valmiera, pp. 14–17.


\(^{39}\) Ibidem, p. 19.
reason than that it was another region and indigenous people here had different historical experience. We can talk about different tribes in the territory of Latvia, with spiritual and secular leaders, but we do not know whether there was such a pronounced division of status groups as in Western Europe. However, one must remember that living space in the territory of Latvia was inhabited by immigrants—crusaders and merchants who came with a certain model of life and founded a social living space comfortable for themselves subjecting the local population.¹⁰

The medieval man had a perception of the world full of various obsessions. The man followed the principle of not sinning in order to go to paradise instead of hell. God and His miracles are almighty. “Only saints and God work miracles; a man is unable to do so, however, if a man can work miracles, it is related to magic.”¹¹ In particular, it was attributed to treatment of people or gaining victory in hard battles. Symbolic meaning and the symbolic world were very important for the medieval man. We could even say that he lived in a “forest of symbols.”¹² But, since it was his daily life, he was able to decipher it. There is symbolic meaning everywhere—in art, architecture, Church, politics, ceremonies, such as the royal coronation or passing, shields, flags, emblems, etc., literature were certain allegories are used. Figures, images, and colours are also of importance. Images had the function of conveying information, since many people did not know how to read or write, therefore, images as well as colours and symbols therein were used to convey the message, particularly by the Church.¹³

Medieval man believed that he must live where God put him and he is entitled to nothing more. He knew who he must obey and what is the system in force.⁴⁴ With the consolidation of the new living space, a new unprecedented social environment emerged in the existing medieval society of status groups, where a person acted as a free individual. The town was a living space represented by all status groups of the society, where the existing living spaces—the castle, the monastery, and the village merged as if into one, creating new representatives of status groups for the needs of their existence, such as town dwellers, merchants, and intellectuals.⁴⁵ In a town, it does not matter what is your belonging to a status group, it is important whether you have money. “Money is the town’s lord. Here, a person learns to work and, for the first time in a medieval society, understands the importance of time. He understands the importance of trade. Here, people knew the meaning

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¹¹ LE GOFF. Der Mensch des Mittelalters, pp. 38–39.
¹³ Ibidem, pp. 38–43.
¹⁵ LE GOFF. Der Mensch des Mittelalters, pp. 22–24.
of pillory, beating, and execution of a convict’s sentence. Formation of laws and the rule of law.”

Towns not only formed new status group representatives, but a new structure of society as well. A new way of thinking developed, based on legal, economic, and political principles. This, in turn, contributed to different understanding of the world, culture, living space, and religion. Town dwellers were able to shape their lives more freely at their own discretion, each according to their own minds, promptness, and abilities. People themselves could be the masters over their bodies. In towns, women also had the opportunity to influence what was happening to their lives and body. Women living in towns were often in the same position as men or even higher, for example, wives of merchants, town councillors and craftsmen. It was more difficult for women working in the service sphere, because they sometimes had to sell their bodies to make additional money. This was very important, since until the formation of towns, women simply did not exist as a separate status group, as a separate term. It is clear that she is a person of another gender, but she is a virgin, a wife, a mother, or a widow. A woman has no value if she can not help her family with her own body – economically, legally, or morally. Woman was a commodity in the medieval society. In the Middle Ages, women were married to men twice their age, so the men were not interested in them. Women were lonely. Yes, the woman was the mistress of the house, the mother of her children, but only until the child reached about seven years of age. At this point in the Middle Ages, adult life began and children had to get a job or go to school. So this love is also conditional. The status of a woman living in a town changed, especially if she is the wife of a wealthy merchant, craftsman, or representative of the town council. Here, she was equal, able to make decisions about her body and her right to inherit.

Merchants had one of the biggest impacts on formation of the town society, and their behaviour, which was unacceptable for the medieval society, violated most of the living standards of that time. The formation of merchant and craftsmen status groups. The representatives of these status groups, especially merchants, could call themselves individuals, who did not belong to those who “beg, fight, or work”. They were otherwise-minded. A medieval merchant was a businessman, thus disrupting the current structure of society, where

48 YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, pp. 31–32.
49 LE GOFF. Der Mensch des Mittelalters, pp. 30.
50 A poet of the 13th–14th century wrote: “God put each of us in our own position and within our specific status group. Indeed, the first were clerics that served God in churches and monasteries. The second were knights, as opponents to robbers. And the third status group were peasants. And then there are those who can not or do not want to be a part of the ruling groups – merchants, yes, indeed.” HARTUNG WOLFGANG. Die Spielleute im Mittelalter, p. 35.
God and the religious perception of the world are key elements – merchants had money and time. “Time is money!” Merchants do not follow the standard rules. They support themselves by ruining others. They have their own inner culture and life dynamics.” Merchants and town councillors of towns that were taking shape can be considered a part of the status group called “intellectuals” in the Middle Ages. Representatives of this status group did not always do well, because the Church did not like them. The main reason for this was their independent thinking. They thought in categories that were different from the way of thinking of the Church. Many of them had not only acquired trade skills but also attended a town school or even a university, knew several languages, which helped to facilitate their business opportunities. Merchants had a secular way of thinking. They thought about economics, politics, time, and money. But the main thing was that merchants thought globally. They realized that the local market is not enough to become wealthy, one has to take a broader view. Hanseatic merchants who moved their goods not only by land or inland waterways, but also by sea, were the ones who discovered Livonia from the side of Western Europe. They discovered wax there, fur that came from Russia, fertile land, etc. Consequently, they changed not only the perception of the world in the consciousness of other members of society, but also the everyday things which seem self-evident to modern man. For example, home decorating, using various luxury items in the interior to show where the person has been, putting carpets on the floor or on the walls. The daily diet became more diverse thanks to the Hanseatic merchants, as they got to know the local traditional cuisine while trading and travelling and took elements of these cuisines with them. It is not without reason that the everyday cuisine in Germany, especially in the Northern part of it, is not much different from that of Latvia. Historian Le Goff specializing in the Middle Ages emphasized that “There is something dirty, insulting to the divine society, in the merchant’s profession. He trades in goods, which does not always describe a reliable or just person. He thinks about profit. A merchant is an individual, with a personality that does not blend in with the society. His personality is made up of an occupation skill and understanding of time – time is money.” Nowadays, there is not much evidence of certain merchants who worked in Valmiera from the 13th to the 16th century; there are only a few names that appear in the Rīga

51 See Subsection 1.4 for more about merchants and medieval society.
52 HARTUNG. Die Spielleute im Mittelalter, p. 35.
53 Ibidem, p. 27.
54 LE GOFF. Der Mensch des Mittelalters, pp. 28.
55 Atskaļu hronika / Livländische Reimchronik. Translated by VALDIS BISENIEKS, commentaries by ĖVALDS MUGURĒVIČS, KASPARS KĻAVIŅŠ. Rīga 1998, p. 44.
56 YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, p. 41–49.
58 LE GOFF. Der Mensch des Mittelalters, pp. 29.
Debt Book. The fact that merchants of Valmiera were not only members of the Hanseatic League, but also members of the Blackheads House and the Great Guild, was mentioned by Otto von Huhn in his study about Valmiera.⁵⁹

Craftsmen. The golden age of crafts in Livonia began with the first German craftsmen arriving in Rīga from Gotland and Northern Germany. Craftsmen’s experience and level of skills were similar to those in their home countries. Until the 14th century, craftsmen specialised in specific crafts. Demand grew not only for goods, but also for higher quality. In the 14th century, craftsmen’s guilds formed in Livonia, like in Western Europe. The oldest known guild in Rīga, the charter of which was approved by the council in 1360, was the goldsmiths’ guild. Following this example, representatives of other crafts began forming their guilds and charters throughout Livonia.⁶⁰

Although there were representatives of many different crafts in medieval towns, crafts were less important than trade in towns. Throughout Livonia, craftsmen worked mainly for the local market, satisfying the needs for food, clothing, and household goods. Only some craftsmen’s products, such as barrels and different types of rope, were exported. By analogy, craftsmen who arrived in Rīga, bringing their skills with them, allow for the conclusion that craftsmen who arrived in Valmiera along with crusaders in the 13th century brought their skills in crafts and, already in the 14th century, there was a town of craftsmen and merchants formed next to the Livonian Order’s castle.⁶¹ Judging by archaeological excavations, there were a lot of craftsmen, blacksmiths, potters, bone craftsmen, spinners, skinners, and shoemakers in Valmiera who provided themselves and others with clothing, footwear, and other household goods. The presence of craftsmen was established both inside and outside the castle.⁶² Unfortunately, there are no surviving records of other crafts or belonging to a guild.

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⁵⁹ “In 1365, Valmiera, just like Rīga and Cēsis, was a full-fledged member of the Hanseatic League. [...] On Passion Sunday, Rīga City Council confirmed that Valmiera, like Rīga, Reval (Tallinn), and Cēsis, belonged to the Brotherhood of Blackheads and the Great Guild.” OTTO VON HUHN. Topografisch statistische Beiträge Livlands, Bd. 37: Die Kreisstadt Wolmar. Rīga 1821. Latvijas Nacionālais arhīvs, Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs, Rīga (turpmāk – LNA LVVA), p. 27.

⁶⁰ The purpose of charters was to protect the craftsmen from increasing competition, especially within a particular industry. Town council approved the charter of each guild, which stipulated that craftsmen must take care of the quality of their products; how fast each craftsman should complete his work, for example, tailors and dressmakers had to complete orders within two weeks, while bakers and butchers had to deliver fresh goods every day. The charter also prescribed the hierarchy of work in the craftsman’s workshop – the person in charge was the master who not only supervised the work of journeymen and apprentices, but also taught them so that they could become masters one day (KLIŠĀNS. Livonija XIII – XVI gs., pp. 22–24).

⁶¹ HUHN. Topografisch statistische Beiträge, p. 10.

as repeated fires destroyed the archives of Valmiera medieval town council. However, in the future, it might be possible to find this out from the outgoing information sent to other towns. Like in Western Europe, residents of the Valmiera castle wore garments made of homespun fabric.\(^{63}\) Several signet-rings with images of birds and snakes or dragons have been found in excavations. Such rings were worn as jewellery and personal stamps by both men and women. Also rings characteristic to the Latgalian tribes were found in the castle. Particularly noteworthy is Latgalian jewellery that dates back to the 15th-16th centuries. It includes chains of bronze bars, horseshoe-fibulas, pendants, round fibulas, and amber beads. One silver fibula was also found. Latgalian jewellery testifies to the fact that the locals worked in the castle.\(^{64}\)

Another important group formed in towns – journeymen, apprentices, servants, and maids. They were mostly former peasants who, running away from their master, hid in the town. The law prescribed that if an unfree man lived in the town for a year and one day, he became free. “Town air makes you free.”\(^{65}\) Workers were the lowest status group in towns. They were the ones who cleaned the streets, houses, and pubs, loaded heavy loads and goods, worked in construction, spent hours spinning at craftsmen shops, etc.\(^{66}\) People who came to town from villages hoped to change their lives. Often their only pay for the work was food and a roof over their heads.\(^{67}\) Many women were involved in prostitution in addition to a job in the textile industry in order to earn their living. “In the Middle Ages, being poor in the town was still better than being poor in the countryside.”\(^{68}\) One can only guess how widespread was the status group of workers in Valmiera, but it is known that the locals worked as a service staff at least in the castle – there is no specific information about the town.\(^{69}\)

### 4.2. CLOTHES

“Vestis virum reddit – the clothes make the man.”\(^{70}\) In the Middle Ages, each colour had a specific meaning, linking it not only to holidays, but also everyday life. The role of colour can be seen more clearly in medieval clothing. For each status group, it was determined what colour and fabric they were allowed to wear. One could be punished for wearing clothes of inappropriate colour or fabric. Noblemen, who were less restricted in their actions, often used the strict clothing law to seamlessly blend with the crowd to see how the

\(^{63}\) BERGA. Valmieras pils, p. 41.
\(^{64}\) Ibidem, pp. 47–48.
\(^{65}\) HARTUNG. Die Spielleute im Mittelalter, p. 95.
\(^{66}\) LE GOFF. Der Mensch des Mittelalters, pp. 161.
\(^{67}\) LE GOFF. Die Liebe zur Stadt, p. 40.
\(^{68}\) Ibidem, p. 48.
\(^{69}\) BERGA. Valmieras pils, pp. 46–47.
\(^{70}\) HARTUNG. Die Spielleute im Mittelalter, p. 67.
ordinary people live, listen to what they are talking, etc. It was a political move rather than mere entertainment. Symbols in clothes showed belonging to an order, a master, or a family. For example, a black cross was the symbol of the Teutonic Order, while the royal lily symbolised the French Court. With heraldic elements being used on clothes, a new style (mipardi) was created, where the garment included two and sometimes four colours. This fashion style was allowed only for noblemen and the court jester. The 13th century was the beginning of sewing patterns that allowed to make various cuts of clothes. Sewed-in and tied sleeves appeared, and buttoning became the new trend. Velvet became the most popular fabric. In the 14th century, men's fashion was characterised by long and short vests. Short vests were mostly worn by young people. As pants or tights were skin-tight, in cases when the youngster’s legs were not sufficiently expressive, they “were improved with fiber padding”. Long garments that were inspired by the fashion of the Byzantine Empire were preferred by older noblemen and the highest status groups of the town – merchants, craftsmen and representatives of the town council. While there were few limitations in relation to colours in the noblemen’s clothing, peasants’ clothes could be in green and brown tones only. The reason for this was that they cultivated land. The clergy, in turn, was characterised by such colours as blue, purple, white, gold, and silver.

During the 10th–11th century, when the rules of clothing began to develop, rules were also slowly being introduced regarding what haircuts and beard styles people should have. There were different manners for different status groups. In the perception of a medieval man, if one did not comply with these requirements, he not only disrespected the man-made law, but also the order established by God. Around the 14th century, when many town dwellers were as wealthy as noblemen, laws were issued on the maximum price of fabrics, quality of fabrics, and the amount of fur that could be used in clothing. This was due to the fact that wealthy merchants, craftsmen, and representatives of the town council were far more wealthy than the kings. It was also prescribed how many garments and pieces of jewellery a person could own. As of the 15th century, the depth of décolletage and the length of sleeves were controlled by law. They could not be either too long or short. Men were forbidden to wear short jackets over tight pants and shoes that were too pointy, and these fashion features

71 HELMS. Lieflaendische Chronik. LVVA 4038-2-14, p. 255.
74 Ibidem.
75 YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, p. 64–65.
76 HARTUNG. Die Spielleute im Mittelalter, p. 69.
77 YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, p. 60.
became the mark of recognition of jesters and minstrels. Colourfulness of clothing was banned, as it belonged to the rapidly developing culture of minstrels. As of the 12th century, the favourite colour combinations in the clothing of minstrels and jesters were red and green or black and white. Rich town dwellers were prohibited from wearing large hats and using whole furs and high-quality fabric in their clothing. Women were not allowed to wear hairstyles and cosmetics characteristic to other nationalities. Of course, the extent to which all these laws were adhered to was determined by how scrupulous the town’s spiritual leader and representative of the law were.

Town life required new skills that were based more on real things, not so much on mystical or spiritual notions. Craftsmanship was important here, and whether a person was able to think independently, to assess values and needs. One had to think ahead. Of course, this did not mean that, when becoming a town dweller, a person changed their morale or notions that formed over several centuries, but at least towns offered an opportunity to be different. Although a town dweller’s house was part of the town’s fortification, it was often a small building where a single room accommodated several generations and even some smaller livestock – a pig, for example. As the town evolved, the meaning of house changed as well. As of the 14th century, when more and more new goods were brought to towns and villages by merchants, the number of shops, craftsmen shops, and accommodations grew, therefore these places needed signs of distinction. Heraldry played an increasingly important role. Everyone tried to give their house a distinguishing feature. For a town dweller, house became important. It is not without reason that so many keys have been found during archaeological excavations. People guarded their houses. Here, people also acquired the understanding of a neighbour for the first time because they had the opportunity to ask someone to look after their house during their absence. It was no longer a hut for sleeping, the appearance of their house was important for people.

4.3. CULTURE, FOOD AND ENTERTAINMENT

These spheres were highly interconnected in towns. Although people had little entertainment and worked hard in the Middle Ages, no feast could be imagined without

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78 “His coat was half green, half red, a short overcoat, a yellow hood. He took the bow and lyre and turned into a minstrel. He covered himself with a short overcoat and hood that was tied with ribbons. Different things necessary for a minstrel hang from underneath the coat.” HARTUNG. Die Spielleute im Mittelalter, p. 73–74.
80 Ibidem, p. 70.
82 LE GOFF Der Mensch des Mittelalters, p. 170.
83 YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, p. 57.
84 LE GOFF Die Liebe zur Stadt, pp. 71–72.
85 YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, p. 71–72.
proper eating, drinking, and entertainment. Each person had their own role and significance at town festivities. Celebrations usually took the form of carnivals or processions, accompanied by a play. There were a lot of festivities in the Middle Ages, and most of them were related to religion and Church. However, in the urban environment, festivities changed, becoming more secular. Festivities that initially were religious turned into a series of fun dances, songs, and games. As the significance of festivities in towns grew, a new status group emerged in the society that could earn thanks to the numerous festivities. Those were minstrels who performed the duties of a master of ceremony. They were the ones who took care of music, games, and entertainment both at big festivities and in everyday life. They entertained people with their songs, poetry, and games at market places or on street corners. Minstrels were an integral part of both town and Church celebrations, as well as public and private events. They staged plays that, according to the client’s wishes, were of a spiritual character (for example, a scene from the Bible), or performed at the market, for the sake of amusing people, mainly playing upon historic events or the current political situations. Songs, dances, and music were an integral part of festivities. Minstrels were the ones who created the musical accompaniment. As of the second half of the 12th century, the most commonly mentioned instruments were harp, lyre, violin, flute, bells, tambourine, bagpipes, flageolet, hurdy-gurdy, dulcimer. It was very expensive to make a musical instrument. Therefore, in principle, musical instruments belonged to the life of the castle, while people learned to make simple musical instruments also in villages and cities – a dulcimer, bagpipes, lyre, or fiddle. String instruments were very popular. Festivities and amount/types of entertainment in the town depended on whether the head of the town was a spiritual or secular person. Since most of the towns of Livonia belonged to the Order, which was a representative

86 Ibidem, p. 70.
87 LE GOFF Der Mensch des Mittelalters, p. 26, 55.
88 They danced with skips. The rhythm of the songs usually had the same number of syllables in two lines, which were sung cordially with a single melody and pitch. Dionīsīja hronika, p. 41.
89 HARTUNG. Die Spielleute im Mittelalter, p. 97–98.
90 “A minstrel was a traveller. He was not tied down to any particular place. Street life was his homeland. There were both male and female minstrels. The life of the minstrels who grew up in the court was very different from the life of those who made their living moving from one city or village to another. Although minstrels and jesters often pretended to be fools, they were in fact among the smartest representatives of the medieval society. They thought independently, they were historians and politicians, because they had to be familiar with these spheres in order to create a compelling play or poetry. They had to be able to portray the present and past. They had to know legends, stories, and historical events. Along with merchants, minstrels were the ones who learned foreign languages very soon. In order to sell your product – a story, a play, or a song –, it is better to do that in the language of the audience.” HARTUNG. Die Spielleute im Mittelalter, p. 97–98.
91 HARTUNG. Die Spielleute im Mittelalter, p. 35–40.
92 Ibidem, p. 65.
93 “The musical instruments found in the castle show that music was also played in the Valmiera Castle. Six mouth harps and a pipe were found. Special musicians played music in medieval castles, entertaining the people who lived there.” Berga. Valmieras pils, p. 51.
94 YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, p. 22–23.
of the clergy, it was most likely that festivities and the town itself were equally spiritual and secular.\textsuperscript{95} In this aspect, the status of a Hanseatic town could also play its role, since towns with independent trade relations had a much more secular cultural life, which was, therefore, more varied and louder.\textsuperscript{96}

Of course, the significance of the three most important events in man’s life – birth, marriage, and death – remained the same.\textsuperscript{97} \textit{“Therefore, Hymen often brought the new ones to the altar, who were joined in the most holy marriage. There is not a day in the town when no child is baptised in holy water in church.”}\textsuperscript{98}

Town dwellers depended on the market – on the size, type, and frequency of fairs. They were always held alongside big festivities, and regular local markets were held.\textsuperscript{99} In spring festivals, which celebrated the awakening of nature and passing of darkness, a prominent role was played by loud and splendid pageants. People were shouting, they sang, played games and theatre plays were performed. The main attribute was the pole mounted in the centre of the market square, which people climbed up to get prizes. These festivities were popular not only in big towns, but also in villages and small towns.\textsuperscript{100} If we assume that Valmiera belongs to the family of small medieval towns, then most likely such festivities were also held in Valmiera.

The main difference in town festivities was the fact that people learned to express their emotions, celebrating festivities with true joy, not, for example, because of the fact that it was an apostle’s feast day. People learned to laugh.\textsuperscript{101}


\textsuperscript{95} JÜRJO-PÕLTSAM. Grundzüge des livländischen Städtewesens im Mittelalter, p. 120.
\textsuperscript{96} HARTUNG. Die Spieelleute im Mittelalter, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{97} YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, p. 16–24.
\textsuperscript{99} LE GOFF. Der Mensch des Mittelalters, pp. 161.
\textsuperscript{100} YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, p. 122.
\textsuperscript{101} LE GOFF. Die Liebe zur Stadt, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibidem, pp. 120–121.
February 103; feast day of Saint John the Baptist (24th of June), Saint George's Day (22nd of April) 104; Ash Wednesday (17th of February) 105; Saint Lucy's Day (13th of February) 106; Saint Valentine's Day (14th of February) 107; Easter 108; Passion Sunday, Saint Martin's Day 109; Michaelmas 110; Whitsunday 111; Saint James’ Day (25th of July), the Assumption of Mary into Heaven (the middle of August), Lent 112; Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles (27th of October), All Saints’ Day (2nd of November) 113; Feast of Saints Peter and Paul 114; Lord's birthday 115; Three Kings’ Day 116. Other feast days were also mentioned, which are closely related to the calendar of the Catholic Church and have grown apart from the modern world. Unfortunately, the information provided by Hermann von Wartberge does not have a detailed description of the feast days, only mentioning attacks or persons killed on a given day. Feast days were used more as a reference point. Many feast days are mentioned in connection with Mary, probably because Livonia was equated with the land of Mary. 117 In Valmiera, according to Otto von Huhn, three large-scale fairs were still held in early 19th century: on the 26th of July (St. Anne’s Feast Day), 29th of September (Michaelmas), and 28th of October (St. Simon’s Feast Day). 118 The Market of the St. Simon’s Feast Day has been held since the Middle Ages, when the town’s church was built, therefore it can not be ruled out that the other fairs and feast days have survived since the Middle Ages and are also in line with the more popular feast days in Western Europe.

Different games were one of the entertainment forms for the townspeople. Dice games were the most popular ones. In the 14th century, dice games were banned in several towns, since people became addicted to gambling, which in turn degraded society and attracted many dubious people to towns. 119 Such dice were also found during the excavations of 1979 in Valmiera – Lucas Hill 120. This finding suggests that Valmiera was no exception and its

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104 Ibidem. p. 79, 87, 121.
110 Ibidem. p. 75.
111 Ibidem. p. 95, 113, 147.
113 Ibidem. p. 107, 141.
114 Ibidem. p. 121.
117 “The Virgin Mary was proclaimed guardian of Livonia.” Dionīsija hronika, p. 51.
118 HUHN, p. 32.
119 YAPP. Lebensalltag im Mittelalter, p. 118.
120 Lucas Hill – the hill that is geographically separated from the main part of Valmiera Castle by Rātsupīte glen. The archaeological research of 1978 revealed that Lucas Hill was inhabited from the 13th to the 17th century.
inhabitants enjoyed playing games known in Western Europe. People also enjoyed board games – Snakes and Ladders and Backgammon that were brought here from the East. Small balls made from various materials were found in Valmiera Castle; chess pieces have been found only in some Hanseatic towns, and none have been found in Valmiera, but this does not mean that people here did not know about chess. Noisemakers have also been found.

4.4. EATING AND DRINKING

Although the transition to the three-field system was already made in the Middle Ages, where the arable land was divided into fields for summer and winter crops and the third field was left fallow, most people were starving all the time. It was different in towns, since townspeople made reserves, regularly shopping at markets. People were only starting to master food preservation skills, so they mostly ate fresh produce that was available at a given time of the year. Medieval kitchen consisted of products that nature had to offer. Medieval people used to say, “If you have nothing to eat, you need to drink more.” Hanseatic merchants had a huge influence on the changes in the medieval menu, since their regular travels wiped out any regional peculiarities of food that had formed by that time. Merchants brought with them not only new spices but also new products and recipes that affected the way products were cooked. One such example is herring, which even triggered a war between Hanseatic merchants and the Northern European countries. Townspeople, like noblemen, did not save on their meals and there were several types of meat, fruits and...
vegetables, fish, and cheese on the table. Eggs were also part of medieval diet. In the 15th century, candied wild berries appeared in desserts.\textsuperscript{127} Although beer and wine are often referred to as the most popular beverages, mead was equally popular. In addition, modern man would be unlikely to enjoy even the finest medieval wine. Beer was brewed from yeast or malt\textsuperscript{128}, but wine was made differently in different regions. Since wine was one of the most expensive goods, people found a way to make a wine-like drink from local ingredients. In the South of Europe, it was made from grapes, while Northern European wine could be made of any local berries, with the addition of local or imported spices.\textsuperscript{129} When a crusader was appointed as a member of the Order and gave an oath, he was promised that he would be provided with basic food - water and bread, while a member of higher rank should always have wine or an equivalent beverage on their table. The Livonian masters were no exception.\textsuperscript{130} The masters’ wine cellars were often as remarkable as noblemen’s.\textsuperscript{131} Sage, peppermint, fennel, and dill were the spices that grew in the backyard gardens in every town. Salt was a very important spice, since it was used as the main preservative. While noblemen and richer townspeople enjoyed a diverse diet, the diet of peasants and poor townspeople consisted mostly of grain, bean, or pea porridge and bread, with pork being added only on feast days.\textsuperscript{132} Where there was a water body near the town, people were able to engage in fishing. People of Valmiera also had such an opportunity, and it is likely that there was freshwater fish on their tables. Judging by archaeological excavations, the range of fish offered was pretty extensive. Fragments of broad-fingered crayfish’s claws and bones of the pike, chub, asp, bream, and perch have been found in excavations.\textsuperscript{133} “Hunger is the best cook.”\textsuperscript{134}
5. VALMIERA STONE CASTLE

5.1. TIME OF CONSTRUCTION AND PLACEMENT

It has been repeatedly emphasized in literature that the construction of the Valmiera stone castle began in the 1220s. However, this is merely an assumption. Written historical sources date the time of construction of the castle and church to the time of the Master of the Livonian Branch of the German Order, Willikinus de Endorpe, also known as Wilhelms von Surborch, namely, the period from 1282 to 1287. This information is also implicitly confirmed by the archaeological findings of 2004 – antiquities dating back to the 13th century. During the archaeological research in 1972, a pfennig coined in Visby, which was in circulation until the 1260s, was found near the Valmiera Church. This, in turn, suggests that the place, where the town of Valmiera later formed, was populated in the first half of the 13th century. Whether or not the castle already existed at that time is unknown. Taking into account that several places of a hearth were discovered during the archaeological excavations of 2004, it can be argued that in the 13th century the location of the castle was already structurally populated. It is not possible to specify the time of construction of the castle at this time without more extensive archaeological research.

A strategically advantageous location was chosen for the construction of the castle. It was built on a triangular hill, which from one side is formed by the coast of the Gauja River, and from the other side by the glen of the so-called Dzirnavu River or Rātsupīte (also known as Melnupīte or Dzirnavupīte). Consequently, the castle was arranged architecturally as an irregular quadrangle, the two edges of which reached the glen of Rātsupīte, one edge reached the slope on the side of the Gauja River, while an artificial moat, 30 m wide and 5.5 m deep,
was created on the fourth edge\textsuperscript{140}. On one side of the castle was the glen of Rātsupīte, while on the other side – the slope at the Gauja River.

5.2. ARCHITECTURE OF THE CASTLE

Architecturally, the castle was composed of two interconnected parts. One was the main castle, the other was a castle-front. It is unknown if these parts were built at the same time. Similarly, there have been no indications in the archaeological research that the castle was originally built of wood. We will not look in detail at the second castle-front that was built in the second part of the 16th century\textsuperscript{141}. The purpose of its construction was most likely to strengthen the protection of the castle against firearms, therefore round towers were built on both sides of the castle-front to provide flanking or oblique protection.

Nowadays, there is a small amount of Valmiera Castle ruins left. Therefore, in order to better follow the aforesaid information, a detailed plan of the castle is attached (see Annex No. 1). Part of the castle walls seen nowadays have survived from the earliest construction periods, but some were built during the reconstruction in the 17th century. They will not be considered in more detail in this study because the structure of the castle in the 17th century and its transformation have been analysed in great detail by archaeologist Tatjana Berga\textsuperscript{142}.

Castle walls were built using the masonry shell technique. On the outside, the walls were made of boulders wedged with small granite and dolomite fragments. The middle of the stone wall was filled with small stones, debris, and mortar. The wall of the castle were about 2 m thick (slightly different in different places) and about 10 m high\textsuperscript{143}.

It is also important to note that research on the architectural development of Valmiera Castle is complicated by several circumstances. Firstly, written historical sources mentioned Valmiera Castle many times from the 13th to the 16th century, but they mention almost nothing about the structural design of the castle. Secondly, the archaeological research of the castle is made more difficult by the modern-day construction in the territory of the castle. It has been formed since the 18th century, as a result of which archaeological research is impossible now under the existing buildings, and it has been confirmed that the archaeological layer of the oldest population there was destroyed during the construction of said buildings. Thirdly, as most castles of the former Livonian territory, Valmiera Castle was also reconstructed several times. It happened both during the Middle Ages and more recently. Particular difficulties are caused by reconstruction in the 17th century, during which the previous building structures were demolished or adapted, therefore it is now difficult to

\textsuperscript{140} Ibidem, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibidem, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{142} BERGA. Valmieras pils, pp. 10–22.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibidem, p. 9.
identify the original materials of the medieval castle. Of course, archaeological research has succeeded in identifying the alterations made in the 17th century, but in general they make it harder to perceive and imagine what the castle looked like in the medieval period. Let’s try to sum up the information available from archaeological research and written history sources.

**The Main Castle**

The main part of Valmiera Castle was almost unassailable when there were no firearms yet. On three sides of the castle there were riverbanks, while on the fourth side there was the castle-front. However, despite this, very little of this part of the castle has remained. This can be explained by the fact that firearms were increasingly used in military campaigns in the 16th century. Thus, this part of the castle became easily accessible to the fire of firearms from the so-called Lucas Hill that was and still is located on the other side of the Rātsupīte glen, almost opposite of the aforementioned part of the castle. Consequently, this part of the castle was destroyed during an attack from that hill. Such a scenario is implicitly confirmed by cannon balls found during the archaeological exploration in 2004 and the fallen part of the defensive wall. In this part of the castle, archaeological research confirms what was mentioned in The History of Livonia by Dionysius Fabricius, namely that the Valmiera Castle was besieged by the troops of Tsar Ivan IV in 1577. It was discovered during the archaeological research of 1992 that the NE wall of the castle fell as a result of hostilities and bones of a dead Russian soldier were uncovered. The audit of 1688 also noted that the walls of this part of the castle were completely destroyed.

Structurally, the main castle consisted of two blocks – the NE and SE blocks. On the eastern side of the main castle, there was a vacant area paved with small boulders and surrounded by walls. In view of analogies with other medieval castles, it was meant for protection and was called *Parcham*. The inner courtyard was paved with small boulders, placed so that they formed a water drain, through which the rain-water flowed to the point where it seeped into the ground. The thickness of the norther and eastern outer walls of the castle reached 2.5–2.7 m, which means that this part of the castle was strengthened most thoroughly. Perhaps this was done because the soil of the hill, chosen for the construction of the castle, was unstable for some reason. This is evidenced by the crack in the northern outer wall.

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144 BERGA. Valmieras pils austrumu daļas apbūve, p. 163.
145 Dionīsija Fabrīcija Livonijas vēsture, p. 177.
147 ROBERTS MALVESS. Valmieras senatne. Rīga 1981, pp. 34–41. (Unpublished study. The manuscript is stored at the Monument Documentation Centre of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection with No. 4022).
148 *Parcham* – the part of the castle located between the outer wall of the castle building and the defensive wall of the castle.
wall of this part of the castle found during the archaeological exploration, as well as by sloping layers on the southeast side.\textsuperscript{149}

The northeast block of the castle had about 2 m deep cellars that were used for household purposes. There were no cellars in the southeast block. It is impossible to find out what the architectural structure of the blocks of the castle was.

\textit{Castle-front}

The castle-front was separated from the main castle by a 2 m thick wall with a small gate. In the audit of 1688, it was noted that there are several vaulted rooms in the southern block of the castle-front, one of those had an old stove.\textsuperscript{150} The window openings of these rooms remain in the defensive wall and are still visible. This suggests that this block was built no later than in the 16th century.

Opposite to this block, on the north side, there was another building that was built no later than in the 15th century. A cellar in this block was discovered during archaeological excavations, where a vaulted stone oven with a furnace was built.\textsuperscript{151} Later, in the 17th century, it was rebuilt thoroughly.

The courtyard of the castle-front was paved and, like in the courtyard of the main castle, there was a water drain, through which the rain-water flowed to the part of the castle-front where it seeped into the ground. The castle well, which served as the source of water, was also located in the courtyard of the castle-front. The diameter of the well was about 2 meters, but the depth was about 7 meters. The well was covered with a wooden construction to keep the water clean.\textsuperscript{152} In the audit of 1688, it was marked as unusable and ruinous.\textsuperscript{153}

The first castle-front and thus the castle could be accessed through the projective gate outside the defensive wall. Before the gate, there was the 30 m wide moat mentioned before. There were stone supports in the moat that were used when lowering the bridge. This means that the part of the bridge closest to the gate was a drawbridge.

Nothing more is known about the architectural structure of the castle-front of Valmiera Castle. In the future, it would be advisable to carry out architectural research on the entire territory of the castle, which could give new insight into the architectural structures of the castle.

\textbf{5.3. FUNCTIONS OF THE CASTLE}

In Livonia, most of stone castles were built as territorial and geographical centres that performed several functions in relation to the surrounding lands. This was also the case for

\textsuperscript{149} BERGA. Valmieras pils austrumu daļas āpūve, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{150} MALVESS. Valmieras senatne, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{151} BERGA. Valmieras ordeņpils arheoloģiskā izpēte, p. 281.
\textsuperscript{152} BERGA. Valmieras pils, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{153} MALVESS. Valmieras senatne, p. 37.
Valmiera Castle. The medieval castle was a complicated building that was not self-sufficient. This means that the castle depended on the surrounding lands, in relation to which it performed military, economic, and administrative functions. The castle also had an internal social function.

The population of the Valmiera stone castle dates back to the 13th century. This means that, although there are no specific individuals and evidence of the castle’s arrangement known, intensive life took place in the castle throughout the Middle Ages.

**The Military Function**

Valmiera Castle was one of the first fortifications at the River Gauja and therefore its primary function is most likely to be related to the military domain. Valmiera Castle as a fortress owned by the Master is mentioned in the list of fortresses of 1437–1438\(^{154}\). The presence of the military function is also indicated by the antiquities found during archaeological research: spikes, arrowheads of bow and crossbow arrows, parts of spears, round shots, and musket bullets, as well as a number of harnesses such as horse-combs, horseshoes, and spurs\(^{155}\). This particular group of antiques accounts for the majority of findings. At the same time, nothing is known about the number of the castle's staff – knights, clergy, and half-brothers. It is interesting that later, when Livonia was repeatedly visited by visitors of the German Order, Valmiera Castle was mentioned in neither 1451\(^{156}\) nor 1488\(^{157}\).

In the castle list of 1555, like other places, it was specified both as a castle and a town (arx et civitas)\(^{158}\). However, Valmiera Castle can not be found in the lists of fortresses of 1548, 1550, and 1556 listed by Livonian regional governors (komturs, vogts) in the 16th century.\(^{159}\) In the list of fortresses of 1555/1556, it was specified that Valmiera is a castle and a town located 4 miles from Cēsis. It was also noted that it is a granary (Kornhaus)\(^{160}\). This means that at that time the castle served essentially as a warehouse, thus performing the function of a subsidiary

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\(^{155}\) BERGA. Valmieras pils, p. 10.


castle. This is confirmed by the list of castles of 1560s, where Valmiera Castle was called a subsidiary castle (underschlott)\textsuperscript{161}.

It can be concluded that the castle performed its military function, but apparently it was not essential on the scale of Livonia.

**The Administrative Function**

From the 14th century to the mid-16th century, town meetings (Städtetage)\textsuperscript{162}, Landtag\textsuperscript{163}, Manntag\textsuperscript{164}, court days (Gerichtstag)\textsuperscript{165}, and land courts (Landesgerichtstag)\textsuperscript{166} took place regularly and more often in Valmiera than in other places. Meetings of the Order’s Chapter of Priests or the Supreme Council also took place regularly. Given the lack of expressiveness of the military function, obviously, the choice of venue for meetings was determined by another factor, possibly the geographic one, rather than the military aspect.

Whether Valmiera Castle was managed by a komtur or vogt is unknown. Only the description of a travel of Guillebert de Lannoy (French: *Gilbert de Lannoy*, 1386–1462) from year 1413/1414 mentioned that he came to Valmiera, which is a closed village and Kommende (Weldemaer aussy, qui est ville\textsuperscript{167} fermee et commanderie)\textsuperscript{168}. Overall, from the 13th to the 16th century, only one official of Valmiera Castle is known - Bertram von Walgarden, Judge of the Vassals of the Order\textsuperscript{169}. As for the Master of Livonia, he stayed at the castle occasionally\textsuperscript{170}, mostly during meetings in Valmiera. The castle also served as a meeting place at that time. For example, on 10 March 1532, the Master invited town envoys “to his Valmiera castle”\textsuperscript{171}.

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\textsuperscript{162} A meeting that gathered the three largest towns of Livonia (Rīga, Reval (now: Tallinn), Tartu) as well as several small towns (the number of towns was not always the same, but most of the times the participants were Cēsis, Valmiera, Limbaži, Koknese, Viljandi, Pärnu).

\textsuperscript{163} A meeting that gathered representatives of all four major Livonian status groups: clergy (Archbishop of Riga, bishops, chapter canons), order (officials), knighthood (vassals), and town representatives. Each status group formed its own curia or body, where only representatives of the respective status group consulted together. Decisions affecting foreign and domestic policies of Livonia were made by voting.

\textsuperscript{164} A meeting at which the vassals of a given territory gathered (lands of the archbishopric, bishopric, order).

\textsuperscript{165} A meeting where various trial issues of a local nature were addressed.

\textsuperscript{166} A meeting where various trial issues of a regional nature (Livonia) were addressed.

\textsuperscript{167} Ville – in modern French, this name means "town", but in the Middle Ages this name denoted a village.

\textsuperscript{168} Guillebert de Lannoy et ses voyages en 1413, 1414 et 1421. Commentés en français et en polonais JOACHIM LELEWEL. Poznań 1844, p. 28.


\textsuperscript{170} The nature of sources about the 13th-15th centuries is fragmented, but in the 16th century, the Master stayed at the castle relatively rarely as well, primarily when there was a meeting in Valmiera.

Valmiera Castle was the administrative centre of a bigger area, to which the surrounding lands were subjected. Using medieval documents, the size of the area can not be determined due to the fragmentary nature of the documents. The data of the 17th century, reflected both in the audit of 1638 and in the books of Oxenstierna manor houses in Vidzeme, can be used retrospectively. In the audit of 1638, it was noted that there are 7 pagasti or vakas (parishes) in the Valmiera region and the approximate size of the Valmiera Castle area is highlighted (see Annex No. 2). The same number of parishes is also noted in the books of Oxenstierna manor houses in Vidzeme. Currently, it is impossible to say whether the Valmiera Castle area was this big in the Middle Ages.

The Economic Function

Medieval castles were not usually self-sufficient. Both military and service personnel stayed there who needed food and clothing. The castle was a consumer, although this did not mean that it was not engaged in economic activities. Parts of a loom, a small container with a yarn ball, hooks from wooden barrels, kettle fragments, and pieces of clay pots were found during the archaeological research in the cellar of northeast block of the main building of Valmiera Castle. Also, clay sinkers of a fishing net, pieces of a harness, an axe, a chisel, a sickle, knives, iron clamps, metal bindings of boots, and other items were found. This indicates that there was economic activity carried out in the cellar of this block, as well as tools stored that were used in the castle or outside it. Various tools were also found elsewhere in the castle: awls, shears, spindle whorls, blacksmith’s pincers, and a spade.
Archaeological research also provides information on the diet of people living in the castle. Three places of a hearth were found under the parcham pavement in the eastern part of the main castle. Pottery from the 13th and 14th century was found there, as well as bones of domestic animals (pig, cow, sheep) and wild animals (hare, roe, birds)\textsuperscript{177}. This means that the parcham was created later, possibly during a reconstruction in the 15th century. As mentioned earlier, fish bones (pike, chub, asp, bream, perch), as well as fishhooks and floats of fishing nets were found in the castle\textsuperscript{178}. Grains of rye, wheat, barley, and buckwheat were found in the cellar of the northeast block\textsuperscript{179}.

As mentioned above, at least in the 16th century, the castle performed the functions of a subsidiary castle, where duties were stored. The types of duties were mentioned in the audit of 1601, which states that “since the Bishops’ time, peasants had to provide the castle with the following amounts of duties from their land”\textsuperscript{180}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object of the duty</th>
<th>Amount (per plough)</th>
<th>Object of the duty</th>
<th>Amount (per person or household)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>6 pūri / Lof (1 pūrs = ~48 kg)</td>
<td>Flax</td>
<td>1 Rīga pot (8.376 kg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>6 pūri / Lof (1 pūrs = ~48 kg)</td>
<td>Hemp</td>
<td>1 Rīga pot (8.376 kg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>6 pūri / Lof (1 pūrs = ~48 kg)</td>
<td>Hops</td>
<td>1 Rīga pot (8.376 kg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>1 fathom</td>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>1 Rīga pot (8.376 kg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Roosters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>1 sieks / Küllmet (~ 8 kg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>$\frac{1}{2}$ Küllmet (~ 4 kg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hay</td>
<td>1 cartful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grass (for bedding)</td>
<td>1 cartful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Money for the clerk (skrīveris)</td>
<td>2 shillings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim of the duty</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District or land duty</td>
<td>3 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull money</td>
<td>2 marks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be assumed that such amount of duties would apply to a time no later than the 16th century. Some of them were most likely to be consumed locally, but some were sold.

**The Social Function**

The castle performed one more function internally – it was a shelter for its inhabitants and to the townspeople. They spent their days in the castle, both working and spending their free time. These aspects relate to the castle’s social function.

\textsuperscript{177} BERGA. Valmieras pils austrumu daļas apbūve, p. 169.
\textsuperscript{178} BERGA. Valmieras pils, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{179} BERGA. Valmieras pils austrumu daļas apbūve, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{180} Die älteste schwedische Landrevision Livlands (1601). Hrsg. von ARVEDS ŠVĀBE. Rīga 1933, p. 547.
As mentioned before, the castle was not only a military fortress – economic activity also was carried out there. Archaeological research shows that people in the castle were engaged in forging and weaving. Similarly, they were engaged in agricultural activities outside the castle. It is possible that there was also a shoemaker in the castle. It can be assumed that there were people doing other jobs in the castle, related to horse-breeding, cooking, and other jobs commonly found in medieval castles.

Also various bone products have been found in the castle, such as combs, an ear spoon, a knife blade, etc.\textsuperscript{181} All of them or at least part of them were likely made in Valmiera, since a bone-processing workshop that was operating in the Middle Ages was discovered in 2006\textsuperscript{182}.

Musical instruments have also been found in the castle: a mouth harp and a bone pipe\textsuperscript{183}. The fact that there were also travelling musicians in Livonia is evidenced by a document issued in 1432 in Viljandi, which states that three trombone players arrived from the German lands in Livonia who went to see the Master of Livonia because they wanted to join his service. The document also mentions that they went from Cēsis to Valmiera (\textit{went to Woldemer})\textsuperscript{184}.

As mentioned before, people in the castle also played games using balls of clay and stone mass, and noisemakers (\textit{rūceņi}) were used in some leisure time activities\textsuperscript{185}. This means that people living in the castle had free time for this kind of activity.

The castle rooms were heated with tile stoves. The most splendid tiles were decorated with the coat of arms of Livonian Master Heinrich von Galen (a cross with three hooks) and Danzig (two crosses and a crown above them). Ordinary tiles were green with raised plant motifs\textsuperscript{186}. Portable candlesticks and oil lamps were used to illuminate the premises\textsuperscript{187}.

Taking into account the analogy of other medieval castles, it should be assumed that the staff of Valmiera Castle was mostly of German origin. However, Latgalian antiquities dating back to the 15th–16th centuries have also been found in the castle, indicating that Latgalian men and women were also involved in the performance of some duties\textsuperscript{188}.

There is not much information about the social function of the castle, as is the case with some other aspects. There are no indications of the castle’s arrangement, nor of specific people who lived in the castle. The spurs, which were found in the castle, indicate that there

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{181} BERGA. Valmieras pils, pp. 49–50.
\bibitem{183} BERGA. Valmieras pils, p. 51.
\bibitem{184} LUB, Abt.1, Bd. 8. Hrsg. von HERMANN HILDEBRAND. Riga, Moskau 1884, No. 643.
\bibitem{185} BERGA. Valmieras pils, p. 52.
\bibitem{186} BERGA. Valmieras ordeņpils arheoloģiskā izpēte, p. 288.
\bibitem{187} BERGA. Valmieras ordeņpils arheoloģiskā izpēte, p. 289.
\end{thebibliography}
were Crusaders in the castle, while antiquities of local people indicate that they were working in the service of the castle. People living in the castle spent their days not only dealing with military matters or working, but also filled their leisure time with various activities. They were no strangers to personal hygiene. In general, it must be acknowledged that in the castle, where dynamic life took place in the Middle Ages, no personal references to the folks who lived there have remained to this day.

All in all, Valmiera Castle is still a mysterious site for researchers. We know very little of it as most aspects of the castle remain unknown. The stone castle of Valmiera was built in the 13th century and permanently inhabited throughout the Middle Ages. In the known written sources of history, Valmiera Castle is often mentioned as the place of issue of documents, but there is no information of the people living there. The castle was rarely mentioned in the lists of Livonian castles. This raises a question about the military significance of the castle in the context of Livonia. Perhaps the castle did not play a major role in the military structure of Livonia and served as a secondary fortification in the so-called Gauja corridor area. The question of the significance of the castle remains unanswered. The castle was built, adapting its construction to the terrain, so the castle resembles a peculiar triangle. Structurally the castle is composed of two parts: the main castle and the castle-front. It is difficult to assess the significance of the main castle, because there is few evidence of it, both above and below ground. It has been established that in the 16th century one of the blocks of the main castle was used for economic purposes. In addition, the audit of 1688 suggests that the representative functions were more likely performed by the premises in the castle-front rather than the main castle. Usually it was the other way round. Perhaps it was different in the Valmiera Castle or its functionality changed after the Livonian War (1558–1583). It can no longer be established. The area of the castle-front, for example, the cellar of the northern block was used for economic purposes in the Middle Ages, until its function was changed in the 17th century. An important element of the castle – the well – was located in the area of the castle-front. Both areas of the castle were paved. Although the castle was a consumer, the people living there were also engaged in economic activities. Current research suggests that the castle cellars stored equipment and economic activities were carried out there. The people of the castle consumed grain products, meat of domestic animals and wild animals, as well as fish. It appears that the castle was mostly inhabited by German-born Crusaders, priests, and half-brothers. However, there is no evidence about it. However, antiquities belonging to the Latgalians were found in the castle, which suggests of the service of local inhabitants for the needs of the castle. Residents of the area had to provide the castle with a certain amount of duties, which can be found in the audits of the beginning of the 17th
century and which applied at least to the 16th century. On the one hand, Valmiera had its own role in Livonia – it was a medium-sized Livonian town and a series of Livonian meetings were held there. On the other hand, there is very little written evidence about Valmiera Castle, which still raises a lot of questions.

6. THE TOWN OF VALMIERA: ADMINISTRATION, POPULATION, AND BUILDINGS

Today, when entering Valmiera, there is no doubt that you are entering a town. This is indicated by both a town sign and the density of buildings. But was it like that in the Middle Ages? The word “town” that we use so often in everyday life had various equivalents in the Middle Ages that depended on both the language (Latin or Middle Low German) and the perception and interpretation of the writer. The latter is quite subjective, therefore, it is important to understand what terminology was applied to settlements in Livonia.

To label a populated place in Livonia, such Latin words as vicus, villa, locus, suburbio, oppido and civita were used. Whereas, in Middle Low German language they were palthe, fleck, hakelwerk, vyksbilde, stedeken, städtlein and stad (stat). It is believed that these labels differed by status, prosperity and size of the populated place’s territory. For example, if ‘stad’ was used to describe a full-fledged town, populated places called fleck, hakelwerk and vyksbilde were not considered towns but rather small populated places or villages.

A small insight into the breakdown of populated places is given by the list of Livonia castles (year 1555) in Latin. This document features populated places divided as follows: towns with stone walls (muratae Civitates), towns without stone walls (non muratis oppidis) and villages or settlements (vicis).\(^189\) From a comparative perspective, it is important that in 1690 this list was translated into German by Casparis von Ceumern. Here populated places were categorized as follows: towns with stone walls (gemaurten Städten), towns without stone walls (ohne – die offenen Städlein) and villages or settlements (Flecken).\(^190\) In the said list, Valmiera was referred to as civita in Latin and as städtlein in German, which means that Valmiera was perceived and denoted as a fully fledged town. This is in part confirmed by the town denotations below from the 14th–16th century period.

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\(^{189}\) Archiv für die Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Curlands, Bd. 6. Hrsg. von FRIEDRICH GEORG VON BUNGE, CARL JULIUS ALBERT PAUCKER. Reval 1851, p. 145.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/name</th>
<th>civita</th>
<th>statt/stadt</th>
<th>städtlein</th>
<th>opido</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1323</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1365</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1375</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1430</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1435</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1439</td>
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But what was the town of Valmiera like compared to other Livonian towns? The answer to this question is given by contemporaries. In the Landtag of 1532, held in Valmiera from February 25 to March 7, Secretary of Reval Marcus Tierbach noted down the decisions made therein. Paragraph 43 mentions that “On February 28, appointed men met in the town hall and small towns like Pärnu, Narva, Cēsis, Viljandi, and Valmiera read their decision.” Naming these towns “small” was not a free interpretation of the secretary, because a similar division is also found in other documents, which suggests that in Livonia there was a division of towns not only in commercial districts or the so-called thirds (*derdendele*), but also in big and small towns. And Valmiera belonged to the second group of towns.

6.1. LOCATION OF THE CASTLE

The issue of formation of a place is often related to a number of probabilities, although we have historical sources and examples of other towns available. This is also the case with a

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193 LUB, Abt. 1, Bd. 6. Hrsg. von FRIEDRICH GEORG VON BUNGE. Riga, 1873, No. 2895.
place called Woldemar or Wolmar in Livonia, which we know as Valmiera. The oldest known
evidence is laconic, but allows for a number of important conclusions. In the mid-1280s, a
church was established or maintained in Valmiera, which means that it was already a place
where people lived\(^\text{194}\). Around this time and 20 years later, a number of merchants from
Valmiera (de Woldemer)\(^\text{195}\) engaged in commercial transactions in Rīga, which meant that
there was a specific place with such a name where people lived and were also engaged in
trade. The most active of them was Johaness, who was involved in commercial transactions
almost 10 times in 9 years\(^\text{196}\). Perhaps they played an important role in the development of
the populated place, as in 1323 a system of administration with the positions of a vogt and a town
councillor had been established there\(^\text{197}\). Known historical sources do not allow us to name a
specific year of formation of the town, but allow us to place it in the period from the
beginning of the 1290s to the beginning of the 1320s. It seems that there was a populated
place at that time with two of its key elements: a church and a castle.

The choice of place could have been related to events at the beginning of the 13th
century when the area of Livonia was territorially subdued. The infrastructure of roads played
a huge role in these processes, and military support points were created in strategically
advantageous locations (see Annex No. 3). In the case of Valmiera, which was located in the
territory controlled by the Livonian branch of the German Order, the road intersection, the
location on the major road line Rīga-Tartu and the proximity of the river were highly valued
and a fortress was built there, next to which population outside the castle developed at the end
of the 13th century. We do not have historical sources to confirm such course of events. We
can only assert that there was no population in the place of Valmiera Castle before\(^\text{198}\). No
older evidence has been obtained in the archaeological research of Valmiera town about the
second half of the 13th century\(^\text{199}\), which confirms, to some extent, the formation of
population during the aforementioned period.

Castles, which for a long time were the safest places in Livonia, played a significant
role in the development of the population. It is mentioned that Valmiera Castle was built at

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\(^{194}\) „Item cum domino Joanne archiepiscopo Rigensi instituit et dotavit ecclesias in Wolmar, Wenden, Burtnic et Tricaten in parte fratrum“. Vartberges Hermana Livonijas hronika, p. 60.


\(^{197}\) LUB, Abt. 1, Bd. 6, Reg. 805 a.

\(^{198}\) ERNA BERKHOLCE. Apcerējums par Valmieras būvniecības vēsturi. Rīga, 1955, p. 3. (Unpublished study. The manuscript is stored at the Monument Documentation Centre of the State Inspection for Heritage Protection with No. 80).

the end of the 13th century and it was a guarantor of security for every person who went there. This was a place to find shelter and, if necessary, ask for help. At the same time, the structure of the castle determined that it would be a consumer, not a producer. It created opportunities for those who were able to produce, as well as to those who were able to transport the things produced from place to place. In other words, opportunities appeared for craftsmen and merchants. After some time, a community that formed the town of Valmiera settled down at the castle.

6.2. ADMINISTRATION

Community and town life in the 14th–16th centuries was administrated by the town council with two burgomasters and two town councillors. The town lived according to rights – a set of privileges and freedoms. Documented rights of Valmiera were later destroyed by fires and no part of them has survived, but the inhabitants of Cēsis and Kuldīga also enjoyed the same privileges and freedoms. This means that Valmiera had at one point acquired the so-called Rīga’s rights or the set of rights, which was developed based on the rights of Rīga. The same rights were also enjoyed by towns of Ventspils, Aizpute, Piltene, Limbaži, Koknese, and Straupe. It was not known what the principles of activity of the town council were and how often it assembled, but the town council consisted of separate families, who were possibly part of the administration for several generations. Town council passed its decisions in the town council’s secretariat or the registry. Later they were confirmed with the town stamp (see Annex No. 4). It featured the emblem of the German Order and the inscription “Town of Valmiera” (Civitatis de Woldemer), which once again testified to the symbolic affiliation with the Order. There was also a guild room on the

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200 The time of construction of Valmiera Castle, like many other Livonian castles, is unknown. It is known that a church was established here at the beginning of the 1280s, and people from Valmiera are mentioned in commercial transactions in Rīga around that time. Taking into account the aforementioned, it can be established that dynamic life took place at the location of Valmiera at that time. Such life was almost impossible in the unsettled situation of the 13th century if there was no guarantee of safety, such as a fortification nearby. Archaeological research also shows that the location of Valmiera Castle was inhabited already in the 13th century.


203 FRIEDRICH GEORG VON BUNGE. Einleitung in die liv-, esth- und curländische Rechtsgeschichte und Geschichte der Rechtsquellen. Reval, 1849, p. 156.

204 LUB, Abt.1, Bd. 3. Hrsg. von FRIEDRICH GEORG VON BUNGE. Reval 1857, No. 1131.


206 AuR, Bd. 1, No. 519; AuR, Bd. 2, No. 54.

207 LG, Bd. 2, No. 639.

premises of the town council, the name of which indicates the existence of a guild. We do not know if it was a guild of merchants or craftsmen.

**6.3. INHABITANTS, THEIR OCCUPATION AND BUILDINGS**

Town dwellers were mostly engaged in trade and crafts. Only a small number of people in the town were vassals (military) of the Livonian branch of the German Order. Merchants of Valmiera, as far as known, engaged in trading with Riga, merchants of Reval (now Tallinn) and Lithuanians (*lettouwen*). It is also indicated by archaeological research materials. Historical sources of this type also refer to crafts – metal and bone processing. In the 14th–16th centuries, dwelling houses of townspeople were built of wood or stone and located on sides of streets of the town that were paved as of the 15th century. It is unknown what kind of buildings dominated in the town. Street directions were changed already at the end of the 16th century (see Annex No. 5), hence the town plans of the 17th century should be used with caution (see Annex No. 6). Although there were several taverns in the town, town guests could also stay in barns, if other places were full.

In the Middle Ages, Valmiera was one of the few towns in Livonia, which could be proud of a stone wall, since many populated places in Livonia only had a ditch and an ordinary palisade that served as fortification. It is unknown when the stone wall was built around the town. It may have been built at the turn of the 14th–15th centuries. The thickness of the stone wall reached 2–2.6 m at the base and 1.5 m at the top, and its total length was about 3 km. It was built using the traditional technique with large boulders laid on the outer edges, while the middle of the wall was filled with smaller boulders or debris. The height of the wall, where it fulfilled its main function of protecting, could reach about 6–7 m (see Annex No. 7). The town was accessible through two gates, which were named after two towns – Rīga and Tērbata (now Tartu). The names of the gates were not accidental, because

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210 Schuldbuch, No. 257, 728; LUB, Abt. 1, Bd. 8, No. 1022.; LUB, Abt. 2, Bd. 2. Hrsg. von LEONID ARBUSOW. Riga, Moskau 1905, No. 630.
212 BERGA. Izrakumi Valmieras viduslaiku pilsētā, p. 106.
213 Ibidem, p. 111.
215 Barns (Middle Low German *schiune, schiun, spicher, schune*; Latin *horreum, granarium, scuria*) often served as a place for overnight stay in a medieval town. In the Middle Ages, this name denoted a building, which was most often a filled framework building (wood and clay), where agricultural products (hay, straw) were stored. It was also used as a place of threshing and storage. It usually had a large driveway and high doors and ceilings, often at least two floors, with hatches on the floor. AuR, Bd. 3, No. 297.
216 Palisade (in Latin, *palus* – stake; in Middle Low German, *pal* – stake) – a protective wall made of sharpened tree trunks. One end of the trunk was sharpened, but the other – dug into ground. This kind of wall was made together with ramparts and moats.
there was a street in the town, which was part of the Rīga-Tartu road before there was a town. Consequently, after the formation of a town there, the part of the road was integrated into its building infrastructure. There were three towers in the town wall. Two of them were at the gate and had the same names as the gate. The third was located in the southwest corner of the town, and it was called Stork's Nest (Storchs Nest) in the cartographic materials of the 17th century. The protective function was performed not only by the wall, but also by the terrain of the area. The north of the town was zoned off from the surrounding area by a deep glen where Rātsupīte flowed. In the west, the town was enclosed by a ditch full of water. The ditch was dug from the Rātsupīte River to the Gauja River (however, it is unknown when it was done). In the south of the town, there was a slope that bordered with the Gauja River. The eastern part of the town bordered with the fortifications of the Valmiera Castle.

6.4. RELIGIOUS LIFE

In Valmiera, just like in other densely populated areas, an explicitly Christian religious life dominated. In the area of the populated place at the market square, there was the church of the town’s parish dedicated to St. Simon and St. Judas. The fact that the church was built around the turn of the 13th/14th centuries, is evidenced by both the oldest known fragment of a tombstone from 1346 and the results of archaeological research, where it was established that people had been buried next to the church since the beginning of the 14th century. The burials were conducted following Christian traditions: people were buried with few things, nailed up coffins of plain boards, westward orientation of graves, and the deceased facing east. The fact that life in the town was not easy is also indicated by the analysis of bones of the deceased, presenting evidence of hard physical work. Burials at the church were carried out for a long time, therefore, in time, 8 layers of burials were made. At one of the town’s taverns, there was a church-owned land, which could have been used for the pastor’s needs. There was a religious foundation in the church – vicariate, which was dedicated to St.

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219 MALVESS. Valmieras senatne, p. 112.
220 In 1972, bone inspection and analysis was performed by Dr. Vilis Derums.
221 ATGĀZIS, Izrakumi Valmierā, p. 14; BEBRE, Arheoloģiskie pētījumi Valmieras viduslaiku pilsētā, p. 310.
222 AuR, Bd.3, No. 135.
223 Vicariate – a formation that was usually meant to commemorate a person. Vicariate was a medieval equivalent of a contemporary fund. Usually, vicariates were dedicated to a Saint of the Church, therefore they obtained a more certain form because the founder usually had dedicated a church altar to the Saint. The operation of a vicariate was simple. A memory of a specific person or the founder was very important in medieval times. Therefore, when a person founded a vicariate, a certain amount of money was allocated to hire a vicar (auxiliary priest), who prayed for the founder’s soul, and purchase the necessary objects (for example, candles). However, it was possible to put part of the money left for the vicariate into economic circulation, for example, to loan it to someone. In such case the amount of money increased and memorials for the deceased could be continued for a longer period. Of course, this process involved risks as well, for example, the money might not be returned in a timely manner, and this caused problems in further maintenance of the establishment.
Anne. Unfortunately, there is no more precise information about its location or founder. The vicariate was kept by vicar Georg Gassenhower. Apart from the said church, services were also held in the chapel in front of the town\textsuperscript{224}. Perhaps the chapel was dedicated to St. Anne and intended for spiritual needs of the local people\textsuperscript{225}. Interestingly, both churches were also used to hold meetings when needed\textsuperscript{226}. There is an interesting aspect related to the religious space. A pilgrim’s badge from Spain (probably from Santiago de Compostela), which was a popular destination of medieval pilgrims, that was found here suggests that perhaps a person who had gone to a pilgrimage to Spain and kept the badge after returning stayed in Valmiera in the 15th–16th centuries\textsuperscript{227}. It is unknown at this time whether a pilgrim could have been staying in Valmiera, as the only small towns mentioned in written sources of history with regards to the presence of pilgrims are Koknese and Pärnu.

6.5. MEANING OF THE TOWN

The fact that the town was located at a castle and basically formed a single complex with the castle, had both positive and not so positive effects. It can be assumed that townspeople appreciated the proximity of the castle specifically because of the security aspect, since the castle guaranteed safe trading and living conditions based on regular presence of the military and the arms and armour in the castle. However, the town being so close to a castle of the Livonian branch of the German Order, plus the fact that it was located so that it appeared a part of the castle rather than a separate populated area, there was a big chance that it would not gain the freedom of self-determination that a town would deserve. Let’s look at how much freedom the town had and what the overall meaning of the town was.

It was mentioned before that we are not aware of the set of town’s rights that would allow us to make conclusions regarding the freedoms and privileges of its inhabitants, and, therefore, their responsibilities towards the authorities. This means that information with regard to these aspects has to be sought elsewhere. We know that Valmiera was located in the part of Livonia controlled by the Livonian branch of the German Order, so the town had to be held accountable by the Order. Taking into account examples of other towns, for example, Kuldīga or Limbaži\textsuperscript{228}, the founder of towns in Livonia was almost always the governor of the area or, translating literally, the territorial lord (\textit{Landesherr}). If we apply this to Valmiera, then we can assume that the town was founded and its seignior was the Master of the

\textsuperscript{224} AuR, Bd. 3, No. 135.
\textsuperscript{226} AuR, Bd. 3, No. 19, 135.
\textsuperscript{227} BERGA. Izrakumi Valmieras viduslaiku pilsētā, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{228} LUB, Abt.1, Bd. 1. Hrsg. von FRIEDRICH GEORG VON BUNGE. Reval 1853, No. 985.; LG, Bd.1, No. 117.
Livonian branch of the German Order. The fact that this assumption might be correct is evidenced by a letter written by the Master of Livonia of the German Order on 13 May 1544 to the vogt of Vasknarva (Neuschloss): “Dear Mr. Vogt! Our dear and trustworthy Burgomaster of Valmiera reported and announced that we still owe him 60 Rīga marks in the church’s main treasury, making a total of around 100 marks together with the rent [...]. Since we are the highest custodians of this church, consequently you are too, [...], we ask you graciously and remind you to pay everything to the above-mentioned and trusted people of Valmiera, reaching peace with no grief.”

In the letter, along with the courtesy phrases and traditional forms of writing, the affiliation of Valmiera with the Order was emphasized, and it was indicated indirectly that if the vogt does everything even a bit too late, there will be no objections from the townspeople. Though the Master’s presence in the town from the second half of the 14th century, from when the first documents issued by the Master in Valmiera have survived, was not regular and not so frequent, however, his supreme authority as the town’s seigneur is undeniable.

There are very few documents where the town council of Valmiera is mentioned and even less documents issued by the town council. However, these few documents contain evidence of simplified executive functions of the town council, such as documentation, approval, correspondence, guest reception, etc. The town council also did not have a special role in trade matters, since the small towns of Livonia, as seen later on, entrusted the three large towns of Livonia with representing their interests internationally. It seems that town meetings (Städtetag) were the only place where representatives of the Valmiera town council made individual decisions together with envoys of other small towns of Livonia.

In general, taking into account the things known about the small settlements of Livonia, Valmiera was a small town typical for its time, which seemed to have a fairly calm everyday life although it did not have a lot of freedom. The town had a town council with at least four people performing simple executive functions. Since the beginning of the 14th century, Valmiera was linked to the Hanseatic trade system – the Hanseatic merchants were active there, and the town, along with other Livonian towns, was indirectly involved in the current Hanseatic events. It would seem that thanks to the wall that blocked the city from the castle

229 Vidzemes tiesību vēstures avoti 1336.-1551. (Quellen zur Rechtsgeschichte Livlands). Izd. ARVEDS ŠVĀBE. Rīga 1941, No. 154.
230 LG, Bd. 2, No. 641; LUB, Abt.1, Bd.6, No. 3092; LUB, Abt.1, Bd. 8, No. 387; AR, Bd. 3, No. 297.
232 A meeting at which the towns of a particular region, in this case Livonia, gathered. At these meetings, documents relevant to the entire Hanseatic region were considered, as well as an opinion was formed on topical trade issues defended by the large Livonian towns during Hanseatic days or meetings (Hansetage), held mainly in Lübeck.
233 AU, Bd.3, No. 301.
and the ditch, the castle lived a separate life, almost independently from the town. At the same time, the German Order as the town’s seigneur played a rather important role in its life. Buildings in the town were made of wood and stone, and streets were paved since the 15th century. Valmiera belonged to the group of small towns of Livonia, and because of its low freedom of self-determination it never grew out of this group.

7. VALMIERA AS A HANSEATIC TOWN OF MEDIEVAL LIVONIA

In the 14th and 15th centuries Valmiera was an active member of the Hanseatic League and an important trading hub from Rīga to Russians towns of Novgorod and Pskov. Historical evidence shows that in Valmiera's Order Castle, where the komtur’s seat was located, more than 32 days of Hanseatic towns were organised from 1385 to 1500 where trade issues of the partners were mostly dealt with.234 The subtext of the above lines from newspaper “Diena” in 2000 shows an apparent desire to see the significance of Valmiera as an important trading town and a member of the Hanseatic League. Researchers of the Middle Ages, knowing what information can be found in historical sources, are inclined to be critical about such statements backed by local patriotism or some other motive, since Valmiera was only one of Livonia’s small towns, a local centre, a small star in the Hanseatic constellation, no more than one of the stopping points in the flow of goods between the East and the West. It should be borne in mind that the 32 days of Hanseatic towns mentioned in the newspaper were not meetings of Hanseatic scale (in German – Hansetage), but local meetings of the burgomasters and town councillors of Livonian Hanseatic towns (in German – Städtetage). It is not possible to exclude the possibility that they took place in the castle, but there is no evidence of this statement in the sources – “historical evidence” does not support it. Let's try to find out the true place and role of this small town of Vidzeme in the history of Livonia and the Hanseatic League.

7.1. LOCATION OF VALMIERA AND MEANING THEREOF IN THE TOWN'S DEVELOPMENT

Already during the Middle Ages, Valmiera became a relatively important centre in Livonia, and that was largely thanks to Rīga. Two roads connected Valmiera to the largest town in Livonia. One of them began at the Smilšu gate (Sand Gate) of Rīga, at Iļķene, it split into two and proceeded to Valmiera in two directions – one through the territory of the Archbishopric of Rīga through Krimulda, Turaida, Inciems, Straupe, Stalbe, Liepa, while the second along the so-called Order’s Gauja corridor area – Sigulda-Nurmiži-Cēsis-Valmiera.

Also further from Valmiera, the road split in two directions: one through Burtnieki, Rūjiena, Viljandi to Tallinn or Reval, the other through Ėvele to Ėrgeme, Valka, and Tartu.235

Due to its advantageous location, Valmiera became a convenient place for organising meetings of Livonian towns and Landtags (meetings of status groups). If Kurzeme, which was poorly involved in the political life of Livonia, is not taken into account, Valmiera (and the second most popular venue for town meetings and Landtags – Valka) formed the geographic centre of Livonia, because it was more or less in the middle of the three largest Livonian towns – Rīga, Tartu, and Tallinn. A small distance separated it from the Rīga archbishop’s residences in Limbaži, Turaida, and Rauna as well as from Cēsis, which, alongside with Rīga, served for a long time as a place of residence of the Livonian Master of the German Order. Additionally, the bishop of Tartu and his vassals had a relatively short way to go to the status group meetings convened in Valmiera. It is possible that the Gauja River also played its role in Valmiera’s trade relations and communication with the nearest and more distant locations; in the Middle Ages, the river was more suitable for shipping than nowadays. However, there is a lack of specific information about the use of the Gauja waterway in trade and traffic, so we will not consider it to be a proven statement.

Even though Valmiera was located aside from the main eastern-western trade routes in the east of Livonia: Novgorod-Tallinn, Pskov-Tartu-Pärnu or Pskov-Tartu-Tallinn, it can be assumed that it also developed as one of the trade points there. Already in the 14th century, Valmiera had its own merchants involved in long-distance trade – at the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries, the names of six merchants from Valmiera were found in the Rīga Debt Book.236 Thus, although the Hanseatic long-distance trade in Livonia was fully controlled by the three largest towns: Rīga, Tartu, and Tallinn, it also involved Valmiera, along with other small towns.

7.2. RELATIONSHIP OF VALMIERA WITH THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE

There is little known from historical sources about the relationship of Valmiera with the Hanseatic League and what the town gained from it. Historians consider participation of Valmiera’s envoys in the Hanseatic meetings as one of the main criteria for attributing the town (or any other town for that matter) to the Hanseatic League. Valmiera was too insignificant to think of sending a representative to one of the general Hanseatic meetings held in Lübeck or in one of its neighbouring towns; Livonia, just like other Hanseatic regions, were represented only by envoys of the largest communes – Rīga, Tartu, and Tallinn. However, many political issues of the Hanseatic League were also discussed by the three

236 Schuldbuch 1282–1352, p. 151 (Personenregister).
centres of long-distance trade at regional town meetings in Livonia, which representatives of small town councils were also invited to attend once in a while. In several of such meetings, the presence of Valmiera delegates was documented.

It is difficult to identify certain regularities in the participation of small towns in the meetings of Livonian towns. Different towns received invitations to meetings at different times, although most of the meetings were organised for delegates of Rīga, Tartu, and Tallinn. Obviously, small towns were only invited to meetings when issues related to these towns were dealt with and they were involved with varying intensity. Only one occasion is known (in 1352) when Straupe was invited to a meeting of Livonian towns; participation of Ventspils and Kuldīga is mentioned only with regards to three meetings in the middle of the 15th century.  

For a long time, references with regards to Livonian town meetings were considered sufficient evidence of the participation of Straupe, Ventspils, and Kuldīga in the Hanseatic League and the basis for them to proudly call themselves Hanseatic towns today. However, two authoritative researchers of the Hanseatic League, Volker Henn and Nils Jörn, have recently revised the list of Hanseatic towns after revising and reprinting the classic book by Philippe Dollinger on the history of the Hanseatic League. In the supplement of the book’s edition of 1989, the list of Hanseatic towns included Tartu, Viljandi, Kuldīga, Koknese, Limbaži, Pärnu, Reval, Rīga, Straupe, Cēsis, Ventspils, and Valmiera from Livonia, while in the revised edition of 2012, the list of Livonian Hanseatic towns looks like this: Rīga, Reval, Tartu, Viljandi (?), Pärnu (?), Cēsis (?), Valmiera (?). To all appearances, German researchers do not consider it possible to include Koknese, Kuldīga, Limbaži, Straupe, and Ventspils to the Hanseatic League, and they have doubts about the relationship of Viljandi, Pärnu, Cēsis, and Valmiera with the Hanseatic League. The considerations that made the prominent historians to rank some small towns of Livonia among the Hanseatic towns, while excluding others, are not explained and, when describing the Hanseatic towns of Livonia, Henn and Jörn confine themselves to the following text: “In medieval Livonia, in the territory of modern Estonia and Latvia, there were three or four Hanseatic towns - Riga, Reval, Tartu, and perhaps also Pärnu. However, as matters of the Hanseatic League were discussed in Livonian town meetings since the mid-14th century, smaller towns like Cēsis, Valmiera, or

239 PHILIPPE DOLLINGER. Die Hanse. 6., vollst. überarb. und aktualisierte Aufl. neu bearb. von VOLKER HENN, NILS JÖRN. Stuttgart 2012, pp. 593.
Viljandi were also related to Hanseatic matters, without being involved in the Hanseatic long-distance trade themselves and not being represented at Hanseatic meetings.\textsuperscript{240}

One may agree or disagree with the interpretation of Henn and Jörn, because there is no consensus among experts on the criteria that would allow for a precise definition of participation of a specific town in the Hanseatic League. Representatives of Valmiera participated in 26 out of 103 meetings of Livonian towns in the 14th and 15th centuries, which is quite impressive when compared to other small towns. Valmiera has participated in more meetings of Livonian towns than any other small town, surpassing the delegated of Pärnu and Cēsis, who participated in 23 meetings. They are followed by Viljandi with 20, Limbaži with 14, and Koknese with 11 meetings attended.\textsuperscript{241} Valmiera came into contact with the “big” Hanseatic politics not only thanks to participation in the aforesaid meetings and institutional contacts with the largest towns of Livonia. There are other examples suggesting that there is no basis for doubting whether Valmiera should be considered a Hanseatic town.

In the middle of the 14th century, towns of Livonia were involved in the Greifswald coalition – coordinated fight of Lübeck and its neighbours, the so-called towns of the Vends, against the King of Denmark Valdemar IV. After the first serious defeat in 1362, members of the coalition were forced to enter into a ceasefire with the Danes for two years and to extended it for four more years in 1364, after which they also asked Livonian towns to ratify the agreement.\textsuperscript{242} Rīga, Tartu, and Tallinn agreed to this and confirmed their support to the coalition in special memorandums in April and May 1365.\textsuperscript{243} The most important thing for us in this regard is that the decision was made by the largest towns of Livonia not only in their own name, but also in the name of the smaller towns, with Rīga representing Cēsis and Valmiera, while Tartu represented Pärnu and Viljandi. The small towns, in their turn, gave a written guarantee of readiness to participate in compensation for damages, if such were incurred as a result of the position taken. Only the corresponding memorandum of Cēsis addressed to Riga has survived\textsuperscript{244}, but Valmiera mostly likely also prepared a similar document. An extraordinary military tax (Pfundzoll) was introduced throughout the Hanseatic region to finance military operations, but since Livonia managed to collect very little money


\textsuperscript{243} Ibid, No. 1012.
with the help of this tax, it was necessary to declare a special additional customs duty (schotte). Valmiera, like other small towns, paid this tax, contributing to success in the fight against Denmark together with the largest towns of Livonia. At the meeting of Livonian towns in Pärnu on 2 February 1369, it was recorded what amounts were collected from these towns in the form of these payments.\textsuperscript{245}

7.3. VALMIERA AND RĪGA

The recess of the Pärnu meeting of 1369 documents not only the involvement of nine Livonian towns in the largest Hanseatic military operation in terms of number of participants in the entire history of the Hanseatic League, but also provides information on the organisational division of towns in Livonia, because towns are grouped by thirds, listing certain amounts. It follows from the recess that the first third included Rīga, Koknese, Limbaži, Valmiera, and Cēsis, the second one – Tartu, Pärnu, and Viljandi, while the third organisational unit was formed by Tallinn alone. Sources do not allow to determine the significance of this division in political relations of towns precisely, but the aforesaid role of Rīga as the representative of interests of Cēsis and Valmiera, and Tartu’s presentation on behalf of Pärnu and Viljandi in 1365 suggests that, no later than in the second half of the 14th century, major towns of Livonia had certain custody and influence zones with regards to the small towns.

Most likely, the distribution of the political influence areas among Rīga, Tartu, and Reval matches the economic orientation of a particular small town towards one of the large towns. From this point of view, Valmiera is considered to be a town in Rīga’s sphere of influence and one of the elements of its economic backbone, while bearing in mind that economically Valmiera was also closely linked to the German Order. It would not be an exaggeration to say that such towns as Valmiera, Cēsis, and Viljandi were political objects not only of the Order but also of the large towns. The small towns were “attached” to one of the major towns. In practice, this meant that each of the major towns maintained connections with the small towns under their custody, which were informed via the big towns of the most important events in the Hanseatic League and were involved in the current developments only when necessary. It seems that the small towns did not even try to get out of this passive state. Having to regularly send representatives to Hanseatic meetings would also have been an unbearable burden on their budget.

Relation to the zone of Rīga’s economic influence enabled Valmiera to engage in long-distance trade, but this involvement took place more indirectly than directly. In general,

\textsuperscript{245} Hanserezesse. Die Rezesse und andere Akten der Hansetage. Abt. 1 (hereinafter – HR), Bd. 3. Leipzig 1875, No. 29. See also the additions to and corrections of the calculations in the recess, Ibid, p. 30, note No. 5; INDRIĶIS ŠTERNS. Latvijas vēsture 1290–1500. Rīga, 1997, p. 346.
dependence on Rīga was not good for the development of Valmiera as a centre of long-distance trade, as merchants of large towns introduced various regulatory rules (prohibition for a “guest” to trade with a “guest”, forced unloading, etc.), trying to ensure that the trade between the East and the West through Livonia was mediated by them. Since the 15th century, when foreign merchants (Dutchmen, Englishmen, the Flemish, and others) began to intensively enter the Hanseatic trade region, a decision was made that forbade foreigners from moving inland, forcing them to trade in port towns.246 As a result, it was more difficult for small town merchants to buy goods without the mediation of merchants of Livonia’s major towns, while foreigners had to make direct connections to weaker trading partners, who had the advantage of being linked to local markets.

The fact that the division of towns mentioned in 1369 was not formal is also evidenced by a reference in later sources. In the instructions for envoys of Tallinn prior to the town meeting on 10 June 1425 in Pärnu, it was mentioned that this town is in a disadvantaged position compared to Rīga and Tartu, since small towns help to pay for sending their delegates to meetings, while Tallinn is forced to pay for it all alone.247 To all appearances, two weeks later, Riga called for a meeting with representatives of Cēsis, Valmiera, and Koknese in this regard.248 This example shows that Rīga’s connection with the small towns of its “third” persisted in the 15th century as well.

7.4. VALMIERA AND OTHER SMALL TOWNS AT LIVONIAN TOWN MEETINGS

In general, the delegates of small towns played the role of a younger brother at Livonian town meetings. In the materials of these meetings, there is virtually no manifestations of activities of the small town envoys, including those of Valmiera. It seems that recesses reflect the real situation – the delegates of large towns did not consider the envoys of small towns to be full-fledged political partners, and, at meetings, at least at the official level, they were allocated the role of extras. Let’s illustrate this with an episode from a town meeting in Valmiera, in September 1458, with the participation of representatives from Rīga, Tallinn, and Valmiera. One of the items on the agenda was the question of how Rīga should respond to the actions of the corsairs of Dancig (Gdańsk), which caused the inhabitants of Rīga to suffer heavy losses in the previous summer. After the envoys of the Rīga town council outlined the circumstances of the case to the “other attendees”, in this case – the delegates of

247 LUB, Abt. 1, Bd. 7, No. 300.
Tallinn and Valmiera, and asked for an advice on how to proceed, the representatives of Tallinn promised to discuss the matter with their town council and to announce the answer later. Further, it was noted in the recess that it was decided to find out also the opinion of Tartu, who was absent at the meeting, sending an appropriate letter to its town council, but Valmiera’s reaction, if it was expressed in any form, is not mentioned.²⁴⁹

Similarly, very little is known about the activities of Valmiera and the rest of Livonia’s small towns in other town meetings as well. Most often, historians only have the names of the participants of the meeting mentioned in the preamble of each particular recess, which only allow them to determine the fact of participation. The attitude of small town delegates regarding any of the issues under discussion is rarely mentioned. Let's mention some of these episodes that seem interesting primarily because they attest to Valmiera’s relation to the Hanseatic League not only in the 1360s, but also in the 15th century.

At the Livonian town meeting in Valmiera in January 1427, where assistance to towns of the Vends in the war against the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian King Erik of Pomerania was discussed and it was decided to provide them with financial support as much as possible, envoys of the major towns of Livonia were instructed to discuss all matters of assistance in talks with the representatives of towns of the Vends and Prussia in April of that year in Prussia. Representatives of Pärnu, Cēsis, Valmiera, Viljandi, and Limbaži present at the meeting expressed their readiness to participate in covering the expenses of this delegation.²⁵⁰

Several concrete approvals for the relationships of some small towns in Livonia with the Hanseatic League are found in the materials of the town meeting convened in Valka in August 1435. They show us that the text of the recess of the Hanseatic meeting in Lübeck in June of the previous year was read out to the delegates of Rīga, Tartu, Tallinn, Pärnu, Cēsis, Valmiera, Koknese, and Limbaži, and the following was decided with regards to small towns:

“... for these inland towns (..) to better understand how to comply with them (namely, these decisions – I. M.), it was offered and promised to extract the necessary recess items applying to each of them and provide these towns with written extracts.”²⁵¹ This is one of the few known evidence that certain decisions of the Hanseatic meetings were applied not only to Rīga, Tartu, and Tallinn, but also to the small towns of Livonia, including Valmiera. Certain stiffness at the meeting in Valka in 1435 began after the representatives of Rīga, Tartu, and Tallinn insisted that the small towns of Livonia shall partially cover the costs of large towns sending their delegates to the already mentioned Hanseatic meeting in Lübeck in 1434. The small towns received this proposal without any enthusiasm and, pleading with their financial

²⁴⁹ AuR, Bd. 1, No. 653, § 8.
²⁵¹ LUB, Abt. 1, Bd. 8, No. 956, § 1.
hardship, asked to exempt them from this cumbersome duty. However, Rīga, Tērbata, and Tallinn refuted these objections, pointing out that, firstly, they had counted on the material support of small towns, and, secondly, they represented not only their own but also the interests of all Livonian towns – large and small – and merchants at the Hanseatic meeting.\(^\text{252}\)

An example of Valmiera’s activity – town meeting of 1449, when the people of Valmiera tried to collect money from Johan Bredenschede, town councillor of Tartu, who was present at the meeting and had decided to sell goods of a journeyman, who was sentenced in Valmiera and passed away soon afterwards, so that the town council could pay his creditors.\(^\text{253}\) So, when dealing with local problems, Valmiera also used the presence of its delegates at town meetings in the town’s interests.

The last time the envoys of Valmiera attended a Livonian town meeting was in 1477.\(^\text{254}\) Since the end of the 15th century, the large towns stopped inviting the small towns to town meetings, and later, until the collapse of Livonia in the middle of the 16th century, they performed the function of meetings of delegates of Rīga, Tartu, and Tallinn. Various assumptions are made about the reasons why small towns were driven out of Livonia’s political life.\(^\text{255}\) Whatever the reasons may be, it should be noted that, with the transformation of the Livonian town meetings into meetings of the three large towns, the relatively weak link that connected Valmiera to the Hanseatic League broke off, and Valmiera lost the opportunity to participate in the making of the Livonian territorial policy. Valmiera did not get out of its status of a local, provincial centre any more. Although a large part of Livonian Landtags and town meetings at the end of the 15th century and the first half of the 16th century were convened in Valmiera, the town was just a venue, not a participant.\(^\text{256}\)

It would be an exaggeration to regard Valmiera as an important member of the Hanseatic League. In the Middle Ages, it was a small town with relatively meagre economic potential, the relation of which to the “big” politics was episodic. In spite of that, the Middle Ages, namely, the Order and the Hanseatic League, was the only period in the oldest history of the town, when Valmiera, overcoming local constraints, managed to engage in a broader

\(^{252}\) Ibid, § 6.

\(^{253}\) AuR, Bd. 1, No. 519, § 2.


\(^{256}\) For more on the difficulties encountered by such a small town as Valmiera when receiving the participants of Landtags in the 16th century, see: ILGVARS MISĀNS. Livonijas landtāgu organizācija un norise. In: Latvijas Vēstures Institūta Žurnāls 1992, No. 1, pp. 28–37, particularly p. 30.
political environment, both within its own borders and beyond. In this sense, we might wish that the modern day Valmiera would return to the Hanseatic traditions.

8. HISTORICAL EVENTS, LEGENDS, AND MODERN STEREOTYPES ABOUT THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE. PARALLELS OF HISTORICAL EVENTS.

“For centuries, the Hanseatic League was the economic and cultural power of the North and the Baltic Seas. Its story is sometimes as exciting as a crime novel.”

8.1. HISTORIC HANSA AND RECENT REVIVAL OF ITS IMAGE

Modern or new Hansa. Recently, in the context of both Europe and Latvia, this term has been used increasingly with regard to both tourism and various international projects. The word “Hansa” is used in many names of companies and institutions. The Hanseatic League is being discussed not only at educational institutions, in the scientific community, during big anniversaries of towns, but also on a daily basis. What is the new Hansa, how old it is and what does it encompass? Is it an actual successor to the historic Hanseatic League, a carrier of an idea, or a resurrection of a myth / an image / a legend through some historical events that have become stereotyped nowadays.

Historically, it is not known when the Hanseatic League was founded or when it ended its activities. One can only say that the growth of trade started along with the establishment of Lübeck in 1159 and the colonization of Eastern territories shortly thereafter. Consequently, it is quite problematic to set a point in time, from which one can talk about the new Hansa. Did the new Hansa emerge when Columbus discovered America and when trade routes and the importance of trade changed? Or can its origins be found some time after the last historic Hanseatic meeting in 1669?

At the beginning of the 19th century, more and more attention was paid to the historic Hanseatic League in Germany, looking for national identity and historical phenomena, which would unite the nation. The trend typical for this time was the description of the Hanseatic League in a spirit of romantic and heroic nationalism. Activities of the Hanseatic League were

shown in connection with the territory and cultural space of Germany, using such terms as the *German Hansa* and the *German trade superpower in the Baltic Sea.*

When legitimizing the activities of World War I and postulating Germany as a carrier of culture in the world at the beginning of the 20th century, it was done through the Hanseatic prism. After World War I, the image of the famous pirate Klaus Störtebeker as a representative and advocate of the poor was popularised, particularly among young people. Even today the image of this pirate is one of the ways children and young people in Germany get to know the Hanseatic times in the Baltic Sea and Germany. During the interwar period, when Hitler and the National Socialist Workers’ Party came to power in Germany, a new image was chosen for the subject of the Hanseatic League – the German Hansa, as a self-evident descendant of a superpower of the world and the sea, ruled by Germany. After World War II, when Germany was divided into two parts, researchers had different opinions. In the Federal Republic of Germany, people talked about the Hanseatic League as a unifier of Europe. At the same time, in the German Democratic Republic, the Hanseatic League was presented as a prominent representative of class struggles, where the working man – town dweller – claims his role in society. The weaknesses and shortcomings of the feudal society were highlighted. However, despite the political stance, historians of both sides again turned to social, economic, and cultural-historical issues. Researchers of the Hanseatic League highlighted Germany as “an economic bridge – the intermediary between the East and the West.”

In 1978, the Mayor of the Dutch city of Zwolle expressed the idea of reviving the Hanseatic thought (*Hansegedank*). 57 invitations were sent to former Hanseatic towns throughout Europe, including Valmiera. In 1980, representatives of 43 out of 57 invited towns arrived for the Hanseatic Days of New Time in Zwolle. Just like other towns of Latvia, Valmiera did not attend the first Hanseatic Days of New Time due to the political situation.

Today’s new or modern Hanseatic Days take place every year in one of the former towns of the Hanseatic League to build both cultural and economic relations. By rebuilding the idea that prevailed in the historic Hanseatic League, the towns voluntarily involved in the modern Hansa form an economic, political, and cultural network at the European level using

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the means at their disposal.\textsuperscript{266} In order for this organisation to succeed, it is managed by its Assembly, Commission, and Council. The Assembly is the most comprehensive group of the Hansa organisation, where each town belonging to this organisation has equal voting rights. The Assembly discusses any issue that is important to any of the towns. The Assembly’s main decision-making rights concern the following:

- Acceptance of new member towns and cities;
- Exclusion of member towns and cities;
- Amendments to the Statutes, and dissolution of the HANSE;
- Election of the Council;
- Election of the President;
- Moral and financial support of the Youth Hansa etc.\textsuperscript{267}

Modern Hansa advocates open European integration and the intensification of international relations. On 13 June 2013, Hansa established a new subsidiary, Business HANSE, in Herford, Germany to develop and control those who use the word Hansa in their names.\textsuperscript{268}

On 20 March 1991, another modern Hanseatic organization “Neue Hansa Interregio” was founded, the main task of which was to unite the former German and Northern European countries, in order to strengthen trade and economic relations on an equal footing.\textsuperscript{269}

Rainer Postel, who studied the historiography of the Hanseatic phenomenon, said the following: “\textit{The Hansa of yesterday will be something else tomorrow.}”\textsuperscript{270}

8.2. STEREOTYPES ABOUT THE HISTORICAL HANSEATIC LEAGUE AND MODERN HANSA

Nowadays, it is hard to explain the Hanseatic phenomenon; it is a multi-faceted union that embraces a wide range of social, political, and economic elements. Often, when hearing the name of Hansa or the Hanseatic League, the first thing that comes to mind is a union of merchants. Undoubtedly, that was the main goal of the merchants – to create a free, international merchant-friendly union, but people often forget the things that emerged along with the Hanseatic League, changing the static medieval society that existed before active international trade in the 12th century. The greatest mistake that people make nowadays,

\textsuperscript{268} http://www.businesshanse.com/de/business-hanse/?L=2 (viewed on 08.02.2017).
\textsuperscript{270} POSTEL. Die Wiederentdeckung der Hanse im 19. Jahrhundert, p. 245.
when thinking about the stages of history, is that everything is likened to the present day, while forgetting about the chronological and geographic aspect. Consequently, many stereotypes arise that can turn into legends, but they usually have no historical grounds.

Merchants did not live in villages, castles, or monasteries anymore – there was a new living space. It was a new living space that was formed in the 10th to 11th century – a rapidly developing town. There were other laws – town laws, which were made by no other than the inhabitants of the town and to a large extent merchants and craftsmen. A merchant was an independent person, who was not tied down to a certain place of residence – it was unprecedented in the Middle Ages. Here one could talk about the Hanseatic League as the first global organisation that upset the previous order, creating a unifying cultural, legal, and economic space. However, it would not be correct to equate it with the modern European Union, although, naturally, they have many similar features. The Hanseatic League is often discussed as a global union, but little attention has been paid to the fact that this international trade also developed the internal market and the relationships among Livonian towns.

When one hears the word union, it appears that there must be an official start date or year at least and the end date. The date when each town joined the union, withdrew from it or was excluded, but towns neither joined the Hanseatic League nor withdrew from it. Each town participated in the Hanseatic trading system as much as they could and according to their financial capacity, without losing their rights and freedoms. If they were invited to attend a Hanseatic meeting or to hold it, it did not imply any subsequent responsibilities. Of course, for the time when the meeting took place, the town administration or the town council was interested in the meeting taking place in their town, because the expenses brought along profit and recognition. Like today, when organising major events, the town invests, for example, in the cultural programme or in renting premises, while the guests shop, sleep, eat there, and, if they like the town, they will come back.

Modern researchers of the Hanseatic League divide Hanseatic towns into big and small Hanseatic towns. Valmiera is definitely one of the small towns. But at the same time, researchers acknowledge that every town that perceived itself as a member of this union

271 ENNEN. Frauen im Mittelalter, p. 11–12.
272 LE GOFF. Der Mensch des Mittelalters, pp. 22–24.
276 SCHLÖZER. Die Hansa und der deutsche Ritter-Orden in den Ostseeländern, pp. 120–121.
played a significant role in ensuring successful trade.\textsuperscript{277} One of the greatest fears of medieval people was loneliness, which was particularly relevant during travel.\textsuperscript{278} It was important for towns or settlements not to be located too far apart since attacks of robber gangs, broken carriages, and various accidents were not rare; the distant towns created even more danger. When castle and town systems were formed, they were built so that there would be a specific distance between them. “The settlements in Old Europe had to be located within 4–5 hours from each other, while in Eastern Europe, which also included Livonia, towns had to be located within 7–8 hours from each other.”\textsuperscript{279} It is difficult for a modern person to comprehend that even a small trip to a nearby town took few hours, sometimes even a day, on horseback or by cart. Communication was ensured only with the help of messengers or via letters. The message was brought by a person on horseback or on foot.

Similarly, as there were no agreements on joining the Hanseatic League, there also was no single currency or a seal. Each town retained its signs of recognition. It must be understood that the role of a unifying element in society of that time was different than it is today. The fact that towns belonged to the Hanseatic League did not mean that they hoisted the same flags on their ships as a sign of recognition. No merchant said that he is a merchant of the Hanseatic League - they said that they are merchants of Hamburg, Riga, or Valmiera, and “Yes, by the way, my town is a member of the Hanseatic League.”\textsuperscript{280} It had neither a common staff nor a fleet.\textsuperscript{281}

Who discovered Livonia? When teaching about the Crusades in the Baltics and arrival of missionaries at the end of the 12th century, insufficient attention is often directed to the fact that merchants from Gotland and Germany were the first ones who discovered Livonia. Only after that were they followed by the first missionaries, preachers, and crusaders. It is evidenced by the chronicles about the first arrival of merchants, missionaries, and crusaders on the banks of the Daugava River in the second half of the 12th century.\textsuperscript{282} Along with the merchants, the society in Livonia became acquainted not only with the formation of a new form of life – a town, but also with the Christian beliefs and cultural traits that came from

\textsuperscript{277} Ibidem, p. 126.
\textsuperscript{280} SCHLÖZER. Die Hansa und der deutsche Ritter-Orden in den Ostseeländern, pp. 122.
\textsuperscript{281} LOKERS. Die Hanse – Von der Kaufmannslust zum Städtebund, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{282} “Around 1158, sailors from Westphalia discovered Livonia.” Dionīsija hronika, p. 27; “Once upon a time, there were merchants, brave, rich in honour, fortune and glory. They decided in their minds to multiply this fortune, like some people can do it. God was benevolent towards them: there happened to be a man who knew foreign lands. He took them on a voyage to the Baltics. What else can I say? There, on the banks of the Daugava River, flowing here from Russia, there were people who showed their bravery in battles: [...] Once upon a time, as I was told, a wise man had come along the Germans to whom songs and preaching came easily, for he was a true priest; Meinhard was the name of this man who came here to Livonia.” Atskaļu hronika, pp. 44–46.
Western Europe. The trade in Livonia took place before the intensive arrival of the German and Gotland merchants and missionaries. It was not that they arrived at an empty, economically inactive place. Trading centres had already developed in Livonia, and the new Hanseatic system, with its regular trading, only consolidated and developed it. The ancient trade routes from the prehistoric times included the Daugava River, the sea route – via plana directa secus mare, and the Via Magna road leading to Valmiera and Viljandi.

In the context of Livonia and the Hanseatic League, the German Order should also be mentioned. Society believes that Hanseatic times and knights are two essentially different and unrelated groups of society. Initially merchants went to Livonia with relatively little fear, since the Crusades had not started in the Baltics. They were not affected by internal fights, since merchants stayed close to their ships, avoiding going deeper inland. However, when the German Order took over more and more extensive territories in Livonia, trade was also possible on deeper inland, for example, in Valmiera. The Order was interested in getting goods from merchants, so it ensured the safety of merchants, both on their way to the town and within the town.

8.3. VALMIERA IN THE MODERN HANSA

As previously mentioned, Valmiera, along with other Latvian and European towns, received an invitation to attend the first Hanseatic Days of New Time in Zwolle in 1980, but it was not possible to attend the event due to the political regime. The archive does not contain any material about when exactly Valmiera was officially admitted to the revived Hanseatic League. However, an interview held at the Valmiera Museum with Oskars Spurdziņš, Chairman of Valmiera Local Government at that time, and information provided by the Hanseatic Office in Lübeck confirms that in 1993, at the Hanseatic Days of New Time in Münster, in informal atmosphere, Valmiera, like in the Middle Ages, joined this union without signing any documents and was admitted as a full-fledged member. The only official information confirming this fact is the decision in the Valmiera Regional Archive “Regarding the Business Trip of the Council Chairman to the Conference of the Hanseatic League in Münster. On the basis of the request of the Hanseatic Commission and Decision No. 208 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia of 1 June 1992 on business trips abroad, the Council of Valmiera decides: to regard the participation of the Council Chairman O. Spurdziņš in the conference of the Hanseatic League from 10.08.1993 to 16.08.1993 as a business trip. [..]” However, this decision is not a specific document on when the

283 NIITEMAA. Der Binnenhandel in der Politik der livländischen Städte im Mittelalter, p. 28.
284 Ibidem, p. 50.
285 SCHLÖZER. Die Hansa und der deutsche Ritter-Orden in den Ostseeländern, pp. 89.
agreement with the new Hanseatic League was concluded, as is the case, for example, with the conclusion of international town twinning agreements. Since 1993, Valmiera has participated in all Hanseatic Days of New Time (23 in total) with larger or smaller delegations.

At the same time, the presence of the name of Hansa is occasionally revived through artistic elements, historical exhibitions, or architecture in Valmiera. In preparation for the Hanseatic Days in Riga, which took place in 2001, a mural by Valmiera artists, Jānis Tančers and Zane Gudina “The Hanseatic Wall” was unveiled (see Annex No. 8) on 21 October 2000 in Valmiera, at Lāčplēša Street 1. The mural depicts a map of Livonia in 1570 with the old coat of arms of Valmiera and the famous Hanseatic ship – cog – sailing the Baltic Sea. In 2003, in preparation for the town’s 720th anniversary, Valmiera, in co-operation with the Bank of Latvia and Finnish mint “Rahapaja Oy” under the international coin programme “Hanseatic Towns”, issued a commemorative coin (see Annex No. 9), designed by Gunārs Krollis and modelled in plaster by sculptor Jānis Strupulis. In 2011, when studying and reconstructing the building of Valmiera Museum at Pilskalna Street 1, a boat pier was built in order to facilitate access to the Gauja River and make it accessible by boat, where the boats of Hanseatic and other merchants probably stopped in the Middle Ages. On 11 October 2016, in order to accent to the residents and visitors of the town that Valmiera is a Hanseatic town, a new design element was presented, which depicts Valmiera as a member of the Hanseatic League and everyone has the opportunity to enter into the spirit of a merchant (see Annex No. 10).

8.4. THE BRAND OF HANSA IN MODERN EUROPE

Before looking at the issue of the brand of Hansa in modern Europe, we need to look at the meaning of a brand from the marketing and economic point of view. What is important for a successful brand, what are the components of a brand, and is Hansa, as a body or a phenomenon, able to cover the key elements of a successful modern brand? What has allowed the name of Hansa to survive, even in times when it was not an active organisation trade or mutual cooperation? Similarly, the historical and cultural memory factors that affect the mindset of society – collective memory – should be focused on. Both of these factors have been used in economy and politics to create a successful message or brand that would
influence the decision of the society at a particular time. The name, phenomenon, and peculiar role of Hansa in the development of history has affected many areas of life that we have forgotten nowadays, focusing only on trade, but this is not the only thing that changed and developed in medieval society, when it got acquainted with the Hanseatic League.

One should remember that “we do not make up our mind regarding recognition or denial due to a particular product or brand, but the image created by it. [...] image is the face of an organisation. So, in our understanding, an image covers pictures, interpretations, and associations that determine our judgment about an organisation. Consistency with reality in this case is insignificant.” This is closely related to what cultural memory is. It is similar in the case of the image of the Hanseatic League or any other image in history that is now used as a brand. A large part of society does not have extensive knowledge of what the Hanseatic League is and what role it played in the processes of formation of medieval society, which also affect the present day. Consumers are aware that the name of Hansa stands for something historical. Over time, Hansa, whatever it may be, has been able to stand the highest point in the pyramid of competition – reputation competition. And, if I remember something, it matters in my historical and cultural memory. The historical image of Hansa “helps to gain credibility for the image in the modern mass market, thereby making the brand accepted.” As the name of Hansa is well-known and has a deep historical fame and success, a company using a historically approved image has to prove its performance to society to a much less extent. “It is no longer about simple products, because the company’s brand has become a canonized synonym for the status of success in a competitive environment.” In a study of the Harvard University it was found that 75% of purchasing decisions are made based on the company’s image, and only then comes the price or other factors. When entering a shop, consumer is more likely to choose a smartphone of a well-known brand rather than a little-known brand. Or they will buy a product the name of which they have at least heard. Of course, Hansa is not the only historically recognizable image that has become a successful business brand. However, the fact that even today many companies choose the name of Hansa

296 BUSS. Tēls un reputācija – uzņēmuma komunikācijas stūrakmens, p. 90.
297 Ibidem, p. 91.
298 HILL. Die “neue Hanse”, p. 16.
299 BUSS. Tēls un reputācija – uzņēmuma komunikācijas stūrakmens, p. 96.
symbolises the stability and credibility of the brand in the eyes of the consumer.\textsuperscript{300} As of 17 January 2017, there are 6,239 companies registered in the German Register of Enterprises with the name of Hansa and 10,543 with the name of Hanse\textsuperscript{301}, while in Latvia there are 113 of such companies.\textsuperscript{302} The statistics show that there is 1 company, the name of which includes word “Hansa” (\textit{Hanza}), for every 17,000 people. In Germany, there is one company that uses the name of Hansa for every 5,000 people. So, estimating by the number of inhabitants, the brand of Hansa is three times more popular in Germany than it is in Latvia. Of course, the brand is also used in other European countries and in the Russian Federation. There are also companies and institutions using the name of Hansa.

The success of a brand also depends on the regional context. Each nation has its own significant historical and cultural memory, which forms the nation. For the Greeks, its is Iliad and Odyssey, for the Chinese, it is the Great Wall of China, for the Americans – the Thanksgiving and their presidents. Unfortunately, very often nowadays the interpretation of historical events and their significance is far from the historical truth and they became events of regional significance. Most likely, for a person coming to Europe from Australia, the brand of Hansa would not say much. At the same time, it would mean much more to a person living in Germany, especially in Lübeck, Bremen, or Hamburg.\textsuperscript{303} Likewise, it would seem that the image of Hansa, in the context of Latvia, would mean more to someone coming from a former Hanseatic town than to a person who only studied the history of the Hanseatic League at school. “\textit{Opinions and lifestyles of people can be symbolically represented with a brand image. Each individual uses brand to represent not only himself but also the environment, group, and status that he feels belonging to. [...] brands function as ciphers of belonging. [...] Thus, a specific brand image seems to complement the person or organisation, to which it belongs. Consuming a certain brand shows that the person wants to be taken seriously, wants to belong.}”\textsuperscript{304}

Companies representing a wide range of industries have chosen to use the name of Hansa. These are companies and institutions involved in travel, crafts, arts, sports clubs, construction companies, insurance companies, transportation and delivery companies, car repair centres, caterers, logistics, sales, law services, etc. There are also publishing houses,
guest houses, hotels, hospitals, and nursing homes using this name. The name of Hansa is also used by small micro enterprises that produce exclusive products like coffee, chocolate, or clothing. Since the name of the Hanse is so sought-after, there are variations in how the particular company is named. That is why consumers should be careful to choose the right **Hanza**.

Hansa has also found its place in the eyes of other audiences, not just the consumers who want to build a house or buy coffee. The idea of the Hanseatic League can also be found in several boardgames and strategic computer games. There, people can test their merchant or craftsman skills. There are also many different variations on Hanseatic souvenirs, which can be found in every town that has something to do with the Hanseatic League, in places close to the Hanseatic League, and, of course, special museums of the Hanseatic League.

The brand of Hansa is also carried by the cog, which was turned into a brand of the Hanseatic League as early as the 17th century by Dutch artists. Even today, this type of vessel – cog – is associated with the Hanseatic League. Among the young people in Germany, seafarer and pirate Störtebeker, who is associated with the famous Robin Hood, is undoubtedly the brand of the Hanseatic League. However, creating the romantic mood of this image is clearly a trick played by cultural memory.

From the 19th century up to now, the image of the Hanseatic League is still popular in another aspect, and it is research. Researchers representing a wide range of specialities and levels are still focusing on research of the Hanseatic phenomenon not only in Europe, but also in Latvia. The specific success of the Hanseatic League rouses curiosity, urging people to study it from the political, social, economical, and legal point of view. From the aspect of

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309 LOKERS. Die Hanse – Von der Kaufmannslust zum Städtebund, p. 80.

310 HAMMELS-KĪZOVS, p. 7.
personality and geography. Topics covered range from clothing and eating to studying war conflicts.

“Past events continue to exist as long as the public reflects on them, while the present is a place where the future comes into being and the past is being formulated.”