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## THE LIVONIAN WAR IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY EAST EUROPEAN WARS

The Livonian War is considered in historiography as a conflict which, for nearly a quarter of a century, was the main subject of foreign policy in several countries of Eastern Europe, from 1558 till 1583<sup>1</sup>. In the second half of the 16th century it was a major

<sup>1</sup> *Karwowski S.* Wcielenie Inflant do Liwy i Polski: 1558-1561. roku. Poznań, 1873; *Костомаров Н. И.* Ливонская война // Костомаров Н. И. Исторические монографии и исследования. СПб.; М., 1880. Т. III. С. 45–181; *Форстен Г. В.* Балтийский вопрос в XVI и XVII столетиях (1544-1648). Т. I: Борьба из-за Ливонии. СПб., 1893; *Новодворский В. В.* Борьба за Ливонию между Москвой и Речью Посполитой 1570–1582 гг. СПб., 1904; *Niedzielski K.* Batory i car Iwan w zapasach o Inflanty: (1579–1581). Warszawa, 1916; *Natanson-Leski J.* Epoka Stephana Batoriego w dziejach granicy wschodniej Rzeczypospolitej. Warszawa, 1930; *Bodniak S.* Polska a Bałtyk za ostatniego Jagiellona. Kórnik, 1946; *Lepszy K.* Dzieje Floty Polskiej. Gdańsk; Bydgoszcz; Szczecin, 1947; *Королюк В. Д.* Ливонская война: Из истории внешней политики Русского централизованного государства во второй половине XVI в. М., 1954; *Donnert E.* Der Livländische Ordenstritterstaat und Russland. Der Livländische Krieg und die baltische Frage in der europäischen Politik 1558–1583. Berlin, 1963; *Kirchner W.* The rise of the Baltic question / Second edition. Westport, 1970; *Angermann N.* Studien zur Livländpolitik Ivan Groznyj's. Marburg, 1972; *Rasmussen K.* Die livländische Krise 1554–1561. København, 1973; *Urban W.* The Livonian Crusade. Washington, 1981; *Tiberg E.* Zur Vorgeschichte des Livländischen Krieges: Die Beziehungen zwischen Moskau und Litauen 1549–1562. Uppsala, 1984; *Tyla A.* Lietuva ir Livonia: XVI a. pabaigoje – XVII a. pradžioje. Vilnius, 1986; *Зимин А. А.* В канун грозных потрясений. М., 1986; *Kirby D.* Northern Europe in the Early Modern Period: The Baltic World. 1492–1772. London, New York, 1990; *Tiberg E.* Moscow, Livonia and the Hanseatic League: 1487–1550. Stockholm, 1995; *Виноградов А. В.* Внешняя политика Ивана IV Грозного // История внешней политики России. Конец XV–XVII век. / Отв. ред. Г. А. Санин. М., 1999. С.134–246 ; *Флоря Б. Н.* Иван Грозный. М., 1999; *Frost R.* The Northern Wars:

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war for Livonia, Polish Kingdom, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth since 1569), and Sweden. It occupied an important place in the foreign policies of Denmark and the Holy Roman Empire. Accordingly, the occurring questions, speaking from a military point of view, are: to what extent was this conflict a typical and traditional one for the participant countries, and to what extent was it of a «new type of war»? What impact did it have on the development of warfare? Or did the Livonian War leave almost no trace in the military history of Eastern Europe, regardless of its scale, becoming a standard practice, a routine, an invisible conflict?

To examine this issue, we have to turn to the history of the countries that participated in this war.

**Livonia.** The cadet branch of the Teutonic Order was never particularly active or advanced from the military point of view. That distinguished it from the aggressive and powerful elder branch of the Teutonic Order. Livonians were well familiar with the practice of small, local wars waged by knights, vassals and mercenary divisions (like the Bishops' troops). They were led by small squads of professional soldiers. In exceptional cases of war between the Order and the Bishops against the cities, urban militia was involved.

We will start our countdown with coming to power of the last major politician of Livonia, Master Wolter von Plettenberg in 1494<sup>2</sup>. In the late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries Livonia experienced several internal armed conflicts which today can be compared to civil wars. The most famous conflict was the conflict of 1532 between Reinhold von Buxhoeveden, bishop of the Bishopric of Ösel–Wiek and Wilhelm von Brandenburg, coadjutor of the Archbishop of Riga. The fighting unfolded on the territories of Dagö and Vîk. In 1542, a war almost broke out between the Order and Riga because of the property rights of the Archbishop of Riga.

The major external war of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in which Livonia took part, was the so called First Livonian War of 1500–1503, when the Order's troops advanced on the lands of Pskov, campaigning into it several times and even reaching the Russian fortresses of Ostrov and Izborsk. Ostrov was taken and the Livonians won the battle near Izborsk. In response, Russian troops invaded Livonia and, according to certain sources, by raids reached Helme, Fellin and Wenden. The lands of Bishopric of

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War, State and Northeastern Europe: 1558–1721. Edinburg, 2000; *Хорошкевич А. Л. Россия в системе международных отношений середины XVI века.* М., 2003; *Волков В. А. Войны и войска Московского государства.* М., 2004; *Филлюшкин А. И. Изобретая первую войну России и Европы: Балтийские войны второй половины XVI века глазами современников и потомков.* СПб., 2013; *Янушкевич А. Н. Ливонская война 1558–1570 гг. и Великое княжество Литовское.* Минск, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> *Koneczny F. Walter von Plettenberg landmistrz inflancki wobec Zakonu, Litwy i Moskwy, 1500–1525.* Kraków, 1891; *Lenz W. Auswärtige Politik des livländischen Ordensmeisters Walter von Plettenberg bis 1510.* Riga, 1928; *Arnold U. Livland als Glied des Deutschen Ordens in der Epoche Wolters von Plettenberg // Wolter von Plettenberg : der grösste Ordensmeister Livlands.* Lüneburg, 1985. S. 23–45; *Wimmer E. Die Russlandpolitik Wolters von Plettenberg // Wolter von Plettenberg: der grösste Ordensmeister Livlands.* Lüneburg, 1985. S. 71–89; *Angermann N., Misāns I. Wolter von Plettenberg und das mittelalterliche Livland.* Lüneburg, 2001.

Dorpat were devastated. In 1502 Plettenberg reached Pskov and won the battle at the Smolninsk Lake which brought no political dividends: after staying for some time in the vicinity of Pskov, the Master's troops went back to Livonia<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, constant small «frontier wars» took place on the Livonian-Lithuanian, Livonian-Pskov and Livonian-Novgorod frontiers: these were some individual skirmishes, plundering inroads, incursions, etc. The borderlands environment spawned with marginal people, deserters that escaped from their masters or became outcasts for other reasons. They gathered into armed groups and organized their own settlements. The only sphere that brought them income was a criminal activity, smuggling especially. They had nothing to lose and thus were very dangerous: «...kotorie zlodei i rozboiniki z Litvy povtekali, iako zh nam i teperichi ot tekh zlodeev velikie krv'ny stanoviat'sia» («...from those who came from Lithuania, we had big troubles»)<sup>4</sup>. The demarcation of the border and bringing order to the borderlands did not suit them at all; the frontier mess and everyone's feuds against everyone were much more profitable.

According to Lithuanian metrics, on the eve of the Livonian War, 45 people were killed in Smolvensk land; in Bratslav land 64 people were expelled from their settlements in the last days before the war, and all in all nearly 300 people of Bratslav County were expelled from Livonians and hanged. In the vicinities of the Lake Curcum, enumerators counted 146 refugees and deported them to Livonia. In Drisetsk County 133 estates and 9 lakes were seized. During the frontier conflict with Livonians the possessions of princes of Mosalsk and those of Michael Sapieha were affected. The borderland tragedies are related in sparse lines of the metrics: «...samogo zabili, i dom sozhgli, a statok ego pobrali, a zem'liu ku dvoru svoemu privernuli i teper' pashut» («... he himself was killed, his house burned, his income taken, and his land appropriated and now they're plowing it»), or: «...tykh vsikh vygubili, postinali i poveshali, a zemli ikh ku dvoru svoemu privernuli i teper' pashut» («...they all perished, beaten or hanged, and their lands appropriated and now they're plowing them»)<sup>5</sup>.

But all these conflicts, even though they created the illusion of power of Livonia comparing to its neighbours and its invincibility, were quite negligible on the military scale. A very limited contingent took part in those conflicts. The Livonian defense system was nonexistent. The main forces of the Order were concentrated in the area of Wenden. It was assumed that in case of Russian or Lithuanian invasion the enemy would begin by besieging the frontier fortresses which would take one or two weeks, time enough for more forces to be summoned from the depths of the country. This strategy could work for traditional Pskov-Livonian conflicts or plundering inroads of the borderlands. But for any more significant invasion on several fronts at the same time, this strategy

<sup>3</sup> Казакова Н. А. Русско-ливонские и русско-ганзейские отношения. Конец XIV – начало XVI вв. Ленинград, 1975. С. 201–241; Алексеев Ю. Г. Походы русских войск при Иване III. СПб., 2007. С. 398–405, 411–413, 415–424.

<sup>4</sup> Метрыка Вялікага княства Літоўскага. Кніга № 560 (1542 год) / Падр. А. І. Дзярновіч. Мінск, 2007. С. 44.

<sup>5</sup> Метрыка Вялікага княства Літоўскага. Кніга № 560. С. 35, 37, 48, 51.

was hopeless. This is how L. A. Arbousov characterizes the state of the armed forces of Livonia:

Mnogochislennye, rasseiannye po vsemu kraiu zamki skoree meshali, chem pomagali. Kogda oni byli postroeny, sposob vedeniia voiny byl drugoi. Otriady vassalov, gorodov, krest'ianskikh obshchestv, — orden sam pochti ne imel voiska, — sostavliali silu, ne imevshuiu dazhe pri prevoskhodnom vozhdе bol'shogo znacheniiia. Nel'zia bylo oboitis' bez naemnikov. No sodержanie naemnikov trebovalo summ, kakie imet' bylo nemyslimo bez blagoustroennogo finansovogo upravleniia («Numerous fortresses scattered all around the region were rather a hindrance than assistance. When they were built, warfare was different. The Order itself commanded practically no army, and groups of vassals, towns, peasant communities didn't have any great value even if led by an extraordinary leader. It was impossible to do without mercenaries. But the financial support of the mercenaries demanded such sums of money that were unthinkable to obtain without an organized financial management»)<sup>6</sup>.

Livonia was totally unprepared for a war that aimed to destroy the German statehood in the Baltics. The country basically had no experience in the defense of Livonia as a country during the invasion of a foreign foe. There wasn't any system of coordination of all the disparate forces, no unified commandment, no system of mobilization. Paradoxically, neither the Order nor the Bishops, although having spoken for many years about «the Russian threat», had ever done anything to prepare themselves to that threat. They only speculated on this topic to get financial benefits from the Holy Roman Empire<sup>7</sup>.

So during the Livonian War, in terms of fighting, the Livonians succeeded only in such things as defense of major fortresses (like in Riga or Reval) and certain clashes in a «squad on squad» style. Other than that, the country had no chances. It was an absolutely new kind of war. Livonia had never warded off a foreign aggression before and simply couldn't imagine how it must be done.

**Russia.** For Russia, the war had three sides: 1) war in the borderlands; 2) the offensive in Livonia and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; 3) the defense of Smolensk and Pskov regions.

The war in the borderlands (mainly at the Russian-Lithuanian frontier, because the Russian-Livonian frontier had ceased to exist quite quickly) was traditional and differed very little from the conflicts at the Livonian-Lithuanian frontier. Mutual attacks of the local gentry, plundering inroads, capturing of peasants and livestock, violence and brigandage — these were everyday routine on the Russian-Lithuanian border for many years<sup>8</sup>. The conflicts would quiet down then break out again with renewed vigor. The

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<sup>6</sup> *Арбузов Л. А.* Очерк истории Лифляндии, Эстляндии и Курляндии. СПб., 1912. С. 152.

<sup>7</sup> See the article of Marina Bessudnova in this issue: *Бессуднова М. Б.* «Русская угроза» в ливонской орденской документации 80-х и начала 90-х годов XV в. // *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*. 2014. № 1. С. 144–155. Also see article: *Маазинг М.* «Русская опасность» в письмах рижского архиепископа Вильгельма // *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*. 2010. № 1. С. 184–194.

<sup>8</sup> *Кром М. М.* Меж Русью и Литвой. Западнорусские земли в системе русско-литовских отношений конца XV – первой трети XVI в. М., 1995; *Цемушаў В.* «Вайна пад час міру».

frontier life was independent and relied very little on the ordinances from the political center (for example, even after the Truce of Yam-Zapolsky, the military confrontations on the border continued)<sup>9</sup>.

Two different practices were used in Russian offensive tactics. First of all, it was the practice of raids on Livonia by Novgorod and Pskov troops in the 15<sup>th</sup> – early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries (this tactic manifested itself during the horse raids to Livonia, «hunt downs» which were executed in the same style). But there was also another experience of the subjugation of entire nations, the Khanate of Kazan and the Khanate of Astrakhan, of which the contemporaries repeatedly recalled. Even though it was more of a political than of a military nature (neutralization of the local elite, search and appointment of a «fifth column» in the local environment; introduction of garrisons and establishment of the rule of governors; local distributions of the conquered lands to secure them to the Russian nobility, etc.). In historiography the model of affiliation of Kazan, Astrakhan and Livonia is usually referred to as patrimony: ideologically and practically the affiliation was formalized as an extension of the patrimony of the sovereign of all Russia<sup>10</sup>.

However, in the case of Livonia that patrimonial model was implemented mostly in the ideological sphere, whereas in the political sphere it failed. This model involved primarily elimination of the ruling top and the former sovereigns, and then a transfer of their power to a new, Moscow ruler. There were too many authorities in Livonia: Master, Bishops landesgerrers, Municipality... There was not a single instance that, if seized and subjugated, could have allowed conquering the whole of Livonia.

After depriving the Order of its power and dispersing the landesgerrers, Russia realized that the problem remained unsolved: the lands and the cities still refused to submit. Things needed to be worked out to be able to reach some arrangement: something that the Russians did not know how to do very well. The experience of the affiliation of the Lithuanian Smolensk in 1514 with all its privileges that were close to the Magdeburg Law, relied more on violence and on the principle of «woe to all the vanquished» rather than on the legal contract with the townspeople. While the people of Smolensk were promised to be allowed to keep all their privileges, it remained questionable as to how much of their privileges they actually kept. The same happened in 1558 with Narva and Dorpat which received from the Russian Tsar the letters patent permitting them to keep

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Першая памежная вайна ВКЛ з Масквою (1486–1494) // Беларускі гістарычны агляд. 2008. Т. 15. Сшыткі 1–2 (28–29). С. 5–48.

<sup>9</sup> In September of 1582 Lithuanian troops attacked and ravaged the Great Luke district, Poretsky district and founded fortress at the river Mezha (it was Russian territory). See: Charter from Ivan the Terrible to Stephan Bathory, 1582 // Russian state archive of ancient acts. Fond 79. Reg. 1. Nr. 14. List 387 v.; Report of the Embassy of Prince Dmitry Eletsy, 1582, December // Russian state archive of ancient acts. Fond 79. Reg. 1. Nr. 14. List 507.

<sup>10</sup> See: *Keenan E.* Muscovy and Kazan: Some introductory remarks on the Patterns of Steppe Diplomacy // *Slavic Review*. 1967. Vol. 26. P. 548–558; *Pritsak O.* Moscow, the Golden Horde and the Kazan khanate from a Polycultural point of View // *Slavic Review*. 1967. Vol. 26. P. 577–583; *Pelensky J.* Russia and Kazan. Conquest and Imperial Ideology (1438–1560s). Hague, 1974. P. 65–138; *Kampfer F.* Die Eroberung von Kazan 1552 als Gegenstand der zeitgenossischen ruischen historiographie // *Forschungen zur osteuropaischen Geschichte*. 1969. Bd. 14. S. 7–161.

only a small fraction of their former privileges and rights<sup>11</sup>. This model was completely unattractive to Livonian towns, so the Russians did not succeed in persuading either Riga or Revel to surrender.

Here Russia operated according to the stereotype dating back to the patrimonial model specific to that era: the «center of power» of the enemy had to be found, taken away from the enemy and subordinated. Hence the persistent attempts to win over former Master Fürstenberg to Russian side as well as the failed project of Magnus, «The Livonian Kingdom»<sup>12</sup>. But Magnus had never gained much influence in Livonia. So in reality Russian control rested only on a network of town garrisons and on the authorities of the regional nobility that received certain local distributions. But the garrisons, in the absence of all military activity, became more and more depressed and morose; and in 1585 the nobles that had received land did not at all want to leave and go to Russia, becoming thus emigrants which was an unexpected turn of events for Moscow. So the support of the Russian authorities in Livonia turned out to be unreliable.

For Russia, the Livonian War was a new experience of conquest and subjugation of a European urban area that did not possess a unified center that could be conquered in order to win the war. This experience proved useful in the Times of Trouble, when, now on Russian territory, the authorities had to deal with the rebels who relied on the towns gone over to their side and had no unified center of command.

As for the defense experience, Russia faced an obvious necessity of military modernization, the evidence of which it partly managed to realize. The system of defense of the Pskov border fortresses (such as the fortresses of Voronich, Vybor, Vrev, Oepochka, Ostrov, etc.) that had proved its efficiency by holding Pskov boundaries against small Livonian raids for two centuries, became absolutely useless against the invasion of a large and modern army of Stephan Bathory<sup>13</sup>. The fortresses were outdated and could not represent a serious line of defense. Pskov did not justify itself as a fortress either: its massive stone fortifications were breached by Bathory's small artillery all the same, and the courage of the defenders became its main means of defense. Valuable conclusions were made about the problem of Russian fortifications, so the rebuilding of fortresses in the Northwest of Russia which began in the last third of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was based on the

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<sup>11</sup> *Филлюшкин А. И.* Политическая практика московских властей в Ливонии в первые годы Ливонской войны (новые документы) // *Studia Slavica et Balcanica Petropolitana*. 2008. № 1. С. 77–88.

<sup>12</sup> *Busse K.* Herzog Magnus von Holstein und sein livländisches Königthum. Auszüge aus gleichzeitigen Actenstücke. // *Mitteilungen aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte Liv-, Est- und Kurlands*. Bd. VIII. 1857. S. 240–301; *Renner U.* Herzog Magnus von Holstein als Vasall des Zaren Ivan Groznyj // *Deutschland—Livland—Rußland. Ihre Beziehungen vom 15. bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*. Beiträge aus dem Historischen Seminar der Universität Hamburg. Lüneburg, 1988. S. 137–158; *Hübner E.* Zwischen allen Fronten. Magnus von Holstein als König von Livland // *Zwischen Christianisierung und Europäisierung. Beiträge zur Geschichte Osteuropas in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*. Stuttgart, 1998 (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa. Bd 51). S. 313–333; *Adamson A.* Liivimaa kuningriik. Tallinn, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> *Васильев М. Е.* Из истории земли Псковской (исследования, поиски, находки). М.; Пушкинские горы, 2003. С. 58–68.

most modern principles. The use of the bastion system started integrating such regions as Ladoga, Novgorod, etc.<sup>14</sup>

The experience of defense had its negative side too. When the Russians were dealing with Livonian troops and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, both of which were at approximately the same level of warfare development, they easily beat the enemy. But facing the mercenary army of Stephan Bathory and the massive European mercenary contingents, led to constant defeats. Lag in the development was obvious, and this gap would be caught up with only several decades later when the negative side of the experience was confirmed during the Times of Trouble.

Nevertheless, a very common opinion in historiography of the Livonian War being a «military disaster» for Russia is exaggerated. The military superiority was definitely on Russia's side from 1558 till 1577, and some small lost battles (like the one near Ula in 1564) did not fundamentally change anything. Serious military failures occurred in 1579–1581, when Polotsk, Great Luke, Narva and most of the Pskov lands were lost to the enemy. At the same time Stephan Bathory's siege of Pskov should be rather considered as a victory of Russian arms, as it was seen by the contemporaries. At the end of the Livonian War the Russian army was not broken and remained fully ready for combat (the fact that was confirmed shortly after that in the following war with Sweden).

**The Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Polish Kingdom and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth.** According to the military doctrine of the Kingdom of Poland, the Poles had to fight for their country, but on its territory<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, until the end of the war, the main burden of warfare lay on Grand Duchy of Lithuania while the Polish troops took part in the war only as volunteers and mercenaries<sup>16</sup>. During the «frontier wars» with Russia in 1487–1535 in the East, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania developed a defensive tactic that consisted in the defense of the fortified towns by local garrisons, as well as the offensive of the new Commonwealth troops together with the mercenary troops on the advancing regiments of the Moscow army. A similar system of defense was used against the Tartars.

This tactic was not very successful, because it depended very strongly on the scale of mobilization of «the *pospolite ruszenie*» (noble's volunteer corps). The Grand Duchy of Lithuania had permanent difficulties with that. The *szlachta* did not want to fight. There was a known scandalous episode when Sigismund II Augustus was not able to gather an army after the loss of Polotsk in 1563 and the access to the path to Vilens that the Moscow cavalry had captured. Even the threat to the nation's capital did not inspire the *szlachta* to go to war. This situation resulted from the social structure of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania for which such things as the confrontation between the *szlachta* and

<sup>14</sup> Куртичников А. Н. Крепости бастионного типа в средневековой России // Памятники культуры. Новые открытия. Ленинград, 1979. С. 471–499.

<sup>15</sup> About Polish and Lithuanian military doctrine in the 16th cent. see: *Osterrieder M.* Das wehrhafte Friedensreich: Bilder von Krieg und Frieden in Polen-Litauen (1505–1595). Wiesbaden, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> About mercenaries in Grand Duchy of Lithuania see: *Lesmaitis G.* LDK samdomoji kariuomenė XV a. pabaigoje – XVI a. antrojoje pusėje. Vilnius, 2010.

the magnates, mini-wars between the estates, mutual raids and attacks, taking the peasants away or stealing cattle were perfectly normal things. The szlachta was afraid that, while they were at war, their estates would be ransacked, so they preferred to defend their small personal property while the state managed on its own as well as it could.

The importance in the question of mobilization was the main defect of the military system of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. That is why the fortified towns often found themselves one on one with the Moscow invasion, and, of course, couldn't hold it back (Like in Smolensk in 1514 or in Polotsk in 1563). When «the *pospolite ruszenie*» would however be gathered, and would in addition be fortified by the Polish troops, their actions on the field gave very good results. The Lithuanians won both of the major battles (the battle of Orsha in 1514 and the battle of Ula in 1564). The problem was that, in the overall context of the war, these victories did not decide or change anything, and had only a psychological implication. The Russian troops in the 16<sup>th</sup> century did not stake on the main battlefield because for them those battles were only insignificant, even though unpleasant, local episodes.

The attack of the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania on Livonia was the biggest offensive operation of the Polish-Lithuanian troops since the times of the Grand War with the Teutonic Order in 1409–1411. Livonians did not resist. The troops entered Livonia according to the 1st and 2nd agreements of Vilensk. But the operation was of a military nature, because it supposed an immediate creation of a defense system for the newly conquered land against the Russians and the Swedes. The Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania did not solve this problem almost until the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In point of fact, everything came down to a system of garrisons and small field squads: the mercenary army came to the foreground (the militiamen of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania would not sit long in the garrisons of the distant Livonia), but neither the Polish Kingdom nor the Grand Duchy of Lithuania had money or simply did not want to provide any money<sup>17</sup>. It is known that in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the desperate Chodkiewicz maintained his army with his own money. The mobilization system of the local population has never established by the Lithuanians and the Poles; the integration has never taken place. In practice Livonia remained an occupied territory (albeit voluntarily occupied) with an alien, foreign Polish administration and alien garrisons formed out of foreign soldiers.

In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and even more so in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the garrisons were stationed in fortresses that, from the military point of view, were completely outdated and did not present themselves as strong outposts. Thus, the Poles and the Lithuanians in the Baltics relied on what was in a shaky state from the start. No wonder the major campaigns that aimed to conquer the territories, like the campaign of Ivan the Terrible in 1577, or the Swedish conquests in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, always ended successfully. Fortresses fell one after another. Only the major military centers, like Riga and Swedish Revel could seriously resist the attacks.

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<sup>17</sup> See: *Wimmer J.* Wojsko i skarb Rzeczy Pospolitej u schyłku XVI i w pierwszej połowy XVII w. // *Studia i materiały do historii wojskowości.* 1968. T. XIV. Cz. I. S. 4–91.



For the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the victory in the Moscow war (or Bathory war) of 1579–1581 had a big moral and psychological significance. The slurred and fruitless siege of Pskov was quickly forgotten, the voices of skeptics were drowned in the glorification of the King and the invincible army of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For the Poles it turned out to be a bad joke: confident of the superiority of the Polish arms over the Russian arms, Poland, in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, got easily involved in the military ventures of the Times of Trouble; the szlachta gladly hired the troops of False Dmitry I and False Dmitry II, created its own units, and went to Russia to plunder. Without that memory of the victory in the Moscow war, the stream of volunteers and mercenaries could hardly have been that vast. The unfortunate results of the Polish participation in the Russian Times of Trouble are well known and were in many ways provoked by the «vertigo of success» of the 1582.

The Livonian War played an important part in the development of the warfare of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. There was a clear shift towards the mercenary army which proved itself superior over the Muscovites in comparison to the feudal militia, although both armies disposed of equal forces. The Pskov campaign and the siege of the fortresses demonstrated the need for the development of the Infantry. The military reforms of Stephan Bathory were mostly a response to these needs of the army. The influence of the Livonian War played its part in the progressive involvement of the armed forces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the European «military revolution» of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>18</sup>.

**Sweden.** It was the Livonian War that initiated the era of Swedish conquests in the Baltics which eventually led to the formation of the Swedish Empire and the transformation of the Baltic Sea into the «Swedish Lake». It was during the second half of the 16th century that the Swedes began forming and testing all components of its future conquest tactics such as: the use of the Navy, long military campaigns into the territories occupied by the enemy, the reorganization of the conquered fortresses which were the strongholds of the Swedish rule, etc. From the Swedish side the war was a war of aggression, which, however, did not cause any protests from the Livonian population due to the commonality of the Protestant faith between the two states. Balthasar Russow placed in the third edition of his «Chronicles» (1584) a whole eulogy to the Swedish soldier. Swedish soldiers are not only brave and skillful, but they are downright perfect: «... no curse words could be heard from them, no violent act has ever been noticed from them in daylight or at night, and thus during the whole war». They behaved, «...as if they had vowed to the Almighty God, under the fear of losing their souls to damnation, to die for Revel and Livonia» (my translation. — *A. F.*)<sup>19</sup>.

The Swedes were not perceived in Livonia as invaders, but as liberators (unlike the Catholic Poles who were generally badly accepted by the Livonian society). This is how

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<sup>18</sup> See : *Teodorczyk J.* Polskie wojsko i sztuka wojenna pierwszej pólowy XVII w. // *Studia i materiały do historii wojskowosci.* 1976. T. XX. S. 291–317.

<sup>19</sup> *Рюссов Б.* Ливонская хроника // *Сборник материалов и статей по истории Прибалтийского края.* Рига, 1880. Т. 3. С. 339–343.

Balthasar Russow described the negative reaction of the local population to the Polish management of the Livonians:

...Livonians could no longer regain governance, freedom, justice and rights along with the keys to the city gates; they had to live amongst the Poles only as captives and endure abuse and ridicule from Jesuits and Papists who invaded all the cities and towns spreading hypocrisy among ordinary people, as well as shallow and ungrounded subjects against the Divine Truth and against their own conscience (my translation. — *A. F.*)<sup>20</sup>.

For Sweden, the optimism inspired by the victories in Livonia directed the Swedish politics of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the Baltics. Unlike Poland, this vector was successful for Sweden: by 1621 all the Baltic States were in the hands of the Swedes, and between 1611 and 1617 Russian Novgorod was under their rule<sup>21</sup>.

As for Swedish warfare, during the war Swedish army strengthened its fleet as well as their recruitment system. The particularity of this system was the organization within the nation: the Swedes insisted on the Swedish human resources<sup>22</sup>.

**General conclusions.** With regard to concerning the development of warfare, the Livonian War was multifaceted for the participating countries. It was the interaction of multiple variations of warfare. It was a combination of major conquest wars and local conflicts; a combination of archaic medieval warfare tactics with modern tactics of mercenary armies of the period which began with «the military revolution». In tactical terms, it was a combination of a war around strongholds (fortresses) and campaigns and raids. Besides, the number of major field battles involving considerable forces was small: those were mostly small skirmishes between field squads. The absence of major battles can be explained by the lack of large military units on the field. Even the big Russian army, once inside Livonia, broke down into separate squads which acted mostly independently. The collision of important forces was only possible when they were intercepted on the march (what basically happened near Ergeme in 1560 or near Ula in 1564).

On the one hand, the Livonian War was quite traditional and it cannot be said definitely that this war is associated with the revolution of warfare of Russia, Poland, Sweden, etc. But on the other hand, many new emphases were put on the development of warfare. Marshall Poe got upon an idea, that:

The military revolution came to Muscovy in roughly three halting stages. Prior to the mid-sixteenth century, the Muscovite military was comprised of regional cavalry forces armed with cold steel. Their opponents-Tatars, Lithuanians, Poles-fought in the same way, so nothing more advanced was considered necessary. However in the second half of the sixteenth century the Russians began to encounter new-style forces in the Baltic, and the Muscovite court responded by initiating significant military

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<sup>20</sup> *Руссов Б.* Ливонская хроника. С. 344.

<sup>21</sup> See the last and the most complete book: *Селин А. А.* Новгородское общество в эпоху Смуты. СПб., 2008.

<sup>22</sup> *Tersmeden L.* Organizacia bojowych i administracyjnych jednostek szwedzkich i rozwój taktyki walki w XVII wieku // *Studia i materiały do historii wojskowosci.* 1976. Т. XX. S. 318–354.

reforms. Though the surviving sources do not permit a detailed reconstruction of the course of the reforms, their outline is reasonably clear<sup>23</sup>.

So, the Livonian war had direct relation with the first steps of the «military revolution» in Russia. It's influence to the development of the Russian (and not only Russian!) warfare wasn't so ostensible for contemporaries, but crucial in the long run. The necessity of the development of the bastion system in Russian fortifications became obvious, and so this system started to be actively introduced in the North-West of Russia. The European participants of war became very much aware of the dominance of the mercenary soldier over the nobleman militia on a battlefield. If the financial issue was previously the main reason for hiring (because it was easier to find forces willing to fight for money than make militiamen go to war), now the attention shifted to the subject of efficiency of a mercenary (based on the experience of the Bathory's mercenary army, the success of the Swedish army, etc.).

The inextricable link between the military actions and politics in the affiliated lands became much more apparent. It became clear that the models based on earlier historical experience in the new socio-economic and political contexts were not always effective. The Livonian War brought a lot of new experience (the first Russian conquest of a European urbanized state, the first experience of the evacuation of troops out of a foreign country, etc.). The easiness with which the lands changed hands in Livonia during the whole war, the apparent reluctance of Russian nobility to leave their Livonian lands when the evacuation was announced, showed the imperfection and the crudity of the model of formation of structures that had to solidify the results of the conquest. This experience would be taken into account, and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia would approach the conquests of the lands of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth with much more responsibly.

#### Данные о статье:

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**Заголовок:** The Livonian War in the context of the 16<sup>th</sup> century East European wars [Ливонская война в контексте восточноевропейских войн XVI века].

**Резюме:** Ливонская война в плане развития военной культуры для стран-участниц была многоплановой. В ней взаимодействовало несколько вариантов военных культур. Это сочетание масштабной завоевательной войны и локальных конфликтов, архаичной средневековой тактики ведения войны с современной тактикой наемных армий эпохи начинающейся «военной революции». В тактическом плане это сочетание войны вокруг опорных пунктов — крепостей с дальними походами и рейдами. Ливонская война была достаточно традиционна, и ее влияние на военную культуру не было очевидно для современников. С другой стороны, с ней можно связать первые шаги «военной революции» в России. Стало необходимо развитие бастионной системы в русской фортификации, и на Северо-Западе России ее стали

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<sup>23</sup> *Poe M. The Consequences of the Military Revolution in Muscovy: A Comparative Perspective // Comparative Studies in Society and History. 1996. Vol. 38. No. 4. P. 607.*

активно внедрять. Европейские участники войны в большей степени осознали доминирование на полях сражений военного наемника, воина-профессионала над ополченцем-дворянином. Более очевидной стала и неразрывная связь собственно военных действий и политики на присоединенных землях. Стало понятным, что модели, опирающиеся на более ранний исторический опыт, в новых социально-экономических и политических контекстах не всегда эффективны. Ливонская война принесла много нового (первое для России завоевание европейского урбанизированного государства, первый опыт эвакуации войск из чужой страны и т.д.). Этот опыт будет учтен в XVII в.

**Ключевые слова:** Ливонская война, Иван Грозный, «военная революция».

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**Title:** The Livonian War in the context of the 16<sup>th</sup> century East European wars.

**Abstract:** Regarding the development of warfare, the Livonian War was multifaceted for the participating countries. It was the interaction of multiple variations of warfare. It was a combination of major conquest wars and local conflicts; a combination of archaic medieval warfare tactics with

modern tactics of mercenary armies of the period which began with “the military revolution”. In tactical terms, it was a combination of a war around strongholds (fortresses) and campaigns and raids. Livonian War was quite traditional. But on the other hand, Livonian war had direct relation with the first steps of the «military revolution» in Russia. It’s influence to the development of the Russian (and not only Russian!) warfare wasn’t so ostensible for contemporaries, but crucial in the long run. The necessity of the development of the bastion system in the Russian fortifications became obvious, and so it started to be actively used in the North-West of Russia. The European participants of war became very much aware of the dominance of the mercenary soldier over the nobleman militia on a battlefield. The inextricable link between the military actions and politics in the affiliated lands became much more apparent. It became clear that the models based on earlier historical experience in the new socio-economic and political contexts were not always effective. The Livonian War brought many new experiences (first Russian conquest of a European urbanized state, first experience of the evacuation of troops out of a foreign country, etc.). This experience would be taken into account.

**Key words:** Livonian War, Ivan the Terrible, military revolution.

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