

SUMMARY

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*Conflicts Over Dünamünde Castle  
The Relations between the City of  
Riga and the Rzeczpospolita from  
1561 to Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century*

During the mid-16th century, Livonia experienced rapid political changes. As a result of political struggles and the Livonian War, the Livonian legacy was divided between its neighbours. The City of Riga, one of the most prominent centres in the region, also played an important and distinctive role in these processes and it was able to remain independent until 1582, when it succumbed to Polish-Lithuanian King Stephen Báthory. However, the relations between Riga and the Rzeczpospolita with its institutions remained complicated. The article reflects these complicated relations between Riga and the Rzeczpospolita, based on Polish written sources of the Latvian State History Archive demonstrating the viewpoint of the officials of the Rzeczpospolita. To illustrate the complex relations, the author uses the lasting conflict on Dünamünde fortress because of the right to control shipping traffic between the port of Riga and the sea. The article examines the period between the collapse of Livonia and the beginning of the Polish-Swedish war in 1600.

The economic power of Riga in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the reason for the city's capability to keep its independence at least for some time. During this period, Riga's interests did not coincide with those of the internally unstable Rzeczpospolita that was trying on the one hand to subjugate the city and on the other hand to keep outwardly good relations. The main motivation of Riga was to keep its earnings from maritime trade. According to the circumstances mentioned above, conflicts over Dünamünde castle and other strongholds ruled by Poland-Lithuania were inevitable. Moreover, the situation did not change so much even after Riga legally obeyed to Báthory. The city tried to maintain certain economic and even political independence which was possible because of the internal disorder in the Rzeczpospolita and in its province in Livonia.

On the issue of Riga's conflict with the Polish power centre in Dünamünde, the intentions of both the city and the Rzeczpospolita are revealed as well as the methods used by the conflicting sides to realize their aims. Moreover, it sheds some light on the difficult position of the local Latvians who, on the one hand, suffered even with their lives, whereas they took part, on the other hand, in the economic, political and military life of the territory, as for example with the Dūna pilots from Riga and Dünamünde. Actually, both sides are to blame for the continuation of the conflict. In any

## Streit um die Festung Dünamünde

case, Riga as well as the Rzeczpospolita, maintained an aggressive policy in order to foster their respective influence and power which was, accordingly, nothing unheard of in this period of political deceit and military violence.