

The Baltic - from European Sea of Troubles to Global Interface

Nils Blomkvist, Professor, Medieval History, Gotland University

1. Qualitative Change makes the Baltic Different

The study of Seas

The idea of studying a vast sea as an entity has a formidable pioneer in Fernand Braudel, who analysed the role of the Mediterranean for the peoples surrounding it. His *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* from 1949 demonstrates the extreme permanence of Mediterranean cultures, *longue durée* as he called it, upon which the cyclic movements of conjunctures, and the daily flow of events made little impact. In his later work he endeavoured to generalise these observations on a more or less global scale.¹

But when we turn to our Baltic – even if *longue durée* behaviour stems from the land itself and the general conditions it offers for life – we cannot claim the almost eternal permanence which Braudel tended to see in the Mediterranean case. The structures of the Baltic Rim are certainly old, but not so old that we cannot date their origin and follow their emergence. Again and again waves of change generated *outside* of her system, have reached her shores. The present paper will discuss the impact of two such radical mutations in our history; both generated elsewhere, both making us – the dwellers of the Baltic Rim – into something which we weren't before, namely *Europeanization* and *Globalization*.

These complexes of change came upon us suddenly, with some centuries in between, but remained with us and developed according to their own preferences until now. Hence it seems improper to call them *conjunctures*, but they may not be 'eternal' enough to be labelled *longue durée*. This suggests that the 'rhythms of history', as Braudel saw them, fail to work properly in the Baltic context. Europeanization and Globalization represent qualities that are missing in his vision, which perhaps (seeking a Braudelian formulation) we may name *changes qualitatives*.² But first there is need for some background.

The Baltic before Europeanization

¹ Braudel, T., *Världens tid* (Swed. transl. of *Le Temps du Monde*), Stockholm 1986 pp. 60-75.

² Blomkvist, N., Is the Europeanization of the Baltic a Conjuncture or a Phenomenon of the Longue Durée? Or is there something missing in "Braudel's History Rhythm Machine"? In: Kattinger & al. *Der Ostseeraum und Kontinentaleuropa 1100-1600*. Schwerin 2004 pp. 9-16.

The Baltic Rim always was and to some extent remains a peripheral dead end of the world, a 'finisterre' towards the Arctic. During the latest Ice Age it was fully deep frozen. But for the last 10 000 years or so, it has enjoyed a clement climate compared with other areas at similar latitudes, like Kamchatka or Alaska, chiefly due to the Golf stream.

From Neolithic times on, the Rim has been influenced by civilisations of the eastern Mediterranean, and later by the Romans. The development of seagoing ships during the Iron Age made the Baltic itself, and the rivers discharging into her, into means for heavy transportation, penetrating far into the Eurasian landmass. We may also note that the armies of Charlemagne had come closer than any other extraneous conqueror, but he didn't reach the Baltic and in 813 he settled a border with the Danes. Carolingian expansion may have inspired the formation of multiregional kingdoms in Scandinavia, which we here of from that time and onwards. Charlemagne's son Louis sent missionaries to the emporia of Denmark and Sweden. But their initial success was soon wiped out by rising influences from the East. In the 930s Ottonian Germany invaded Jutland, with little effect for the time being.

Instead Viking-age Baltic was the heart of an East-West system of exchange, tying extremes like Bulgar on the Volga 'knee' and Kiev on the Dnepr together with Rouen on the Seine, and York on the Ouse. Rich finds of Islamic dirhems all around the Baltic tell that the economic wind was blowing from the East in the 9th and 10th centuries. The destructive behaviour connoted with the Viking name refers to groups that were left outside of its advantages and to temporarily dysfunction of the system; it has been shown that the gathering of large Viking hosts in the North Sea coincided with periods when Arabian silver failed to reach the Baltic.

Thus in the Viking Age the Rim remained a vast, autonomous territory, dominated by the emerging Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Kiev-Russian multi-regional polities, to which series of tributary lands (the *skattland* of Norse texts), were added like pearls on a string along the main sea routes. Being a *skattland* was different from being a colony, more like the junior partner of an alliance. The Nordic culture thrived, developed its own unique mode of writing, together with sophisticated poetry and visual arts. Also the Rim kept good contacts with the major civilisations of Islam, Byzantium, and Western Europe, from which they could pick and choose whichever elements they favoured, without falling into dependence on any.

This fortunate situation was interrupted, when around 975 the Islamic coins ceased to come for good. The reason for this remains disputed, but it is obvious that the West was able to fill the monetary vacuum almost immediately. It is also clear that it was not only a monetary change that was going on: between 960 and 1030 most countries in northern and eastern Europe adopted Christianity.

Until about 1050 Baltic Rim polities, notably Denmark, remained quite powerful. Christian mission was carried out with moderation, and syncretism thrived. This was the meek beginning of a soon overwhelming process by which old indigenous habits were challenged by new foreign ones. In the period until 1150, the West-Slavonic Vends made the most vehement resistance, refusing to give up their old many-headed gods. But in the 12th century, within a couple of generations, a flood of change swept over one country after another. Literally everything was altered – material culture, spiritual culture, social structure, political system – as the Baltic Rim was roped in by Catholic Europe. Why Europe? Why precisely in the 12th century?

2. The First Change Qualitative – Europeanization of the Rim

The making of Europe

For some time a new kind of society had begun to form on the European continent, which saw a striking development in the 11th and 12th centuries. A well-known series of western European breakthroughs were hooking into each other. Here is a comprehensive list:

- penetration of a professionalized church organisation and expansive, evangelizing monastic orders all over western Europe;
- intensive growth of commerce in northern Italy, the Low Countries and the corridor in between;
- development of proto-industrial textile production in the same areas;
- emergence and spread of autonomous or semi-autonomous towns and cities in a wider area;
- emergence and spread of a new agricultural system for colonising woodlands in a wider area;
- emergence and spread of new transport, military and store house technologies in a wider area;
- emergence of a more differentiated social structure, the three- or four-partite society;
- integration and centrifugal expansion of these qualities in all directions, reaching the Baltic Rim in the late 11th century.

The expansion wasn't foremost a military one. The struggle of the church for independence from secular leadership was to play a major role. Known to posterity as the Papal Reform programme, it was launched as a moral revolt against the imperial and royal structures of decision-making.

This had particular effects in the trans-continental 'Lotharingian' corridor, the borderland between the German-Roman Empire and the Kingdom of France. The reduction of monarchic rule made it a hot zone of gestating culture and economic growth, from Venice and Milan to Cologne and emerging Brügge. During the 12th century the fairs of Champagne became the exchange centre for all of Europe. And many spiritual orders were founded near by; adhering directly to the pope, and not to any national church, they were a driving force for internationalism. Most impressive were the five mother monasteries of the Cistercians in Champagne and Burgundy. From them more than 300 daughters were founded during the first half of the 12th century, all over Catholic Europe.

Scholars have been debating whether the expansion of towns and commerce or the dynamics of feudal agriculture lay behind the rise, but have had difficulties to handle the most conspicuous element of the period, namely the triumph of Catholic universalism. Its arguments were religious, but it came with a new *political* order, allowing a freer flow of people, goods and capital, at much lower costs (and risks) than during the Early Middle Ages. It can hardly be a total coincidence that its equivalent in the secular world was the forming of a rough but functioning western European *commodity market* in the 12th and 13th centuries.

In a recent book *The Discovery of the Baltic* I claim that the process of Europeanization had a fundamental similarity to the World-system model. This well established geography-of-dominance theory, describes a spatial division of labour between a developed *core area*, a disciplined *semi-periphery* and an exploited full *periphery*. Hence it's different from an empire. A World-system takes control without military conquest and political centralism. In its centre Braudel and others see capitalism, but in the medieval making of Europe I see something else: an unintended coalition between Church and Trade, *ecclesia* and *mercatura*, the father and mother of capitalism; unintended – since traditional Christendom despised commerce.³

³ All this falls back upon Blomkvist, N., *The Discovery of the Baltic*, Leiden & Boston 2005 pp. 35-93 (Chapter II). For the mechanisms of World-systems, see e.g. Wallerstein, I. *The Modern World-system*, New York 1974; Braudel 1986 pp. 15-60.

As a result the extant Empire – of the German-Roman nation – more or less ceased to exist as such in the second half of the 13th century.⁴ If one considers the close geographic connection between the four main localisations of the Champagne fairs and the five mother monasteries of the Cistercians, we are not far from getting a picture of Europe's conception through *ecclesia* and *mercatura*, as precise as the ones the photographer Lennart Nilsson has shown of procreation among humans.

1075-1225: Core area expansion/ Baltic Rim resistance

Let us return to the Baltic. The papal-imperial controversy had occupied the powers of the Continent in a way that might have delayed their penetration of the Rim. This direction of expansion may also have carried less priority than the liberation of the Holy Land and the *reconquista* of Spain. However from around 1120, things European began to pour into the Rim in all shapes and clothing, as a signal that what had been holding Europe back no longer did so. The second crusade in 1147 was indeed launched as a pan-European project directed towards the Holy land, Spain and the Baltic Rim, where the pagan Vends were attacked. But also in already Christianised countries, agents of Europeanization tended to appear in person and demand full scale adaptation.

All through the 12th century, a series of inter-related clashes occurred among the indigenous powers. Between royal cadets in Denmark, *bagler* and *birkebeinar* in Norway, *Götar* and part-time pagan *Svear* in Sweden; Boleslaw the Wrymouthed made an effort to integrate the Vends with Poland, but was forced aside by the German *Drang nach Osten*, and in Russia Novgorod broke away from Kiev. These controversies have usually been discussed as civil wars, which of course they were, but their synchronic occurrence and mutual impact points to a more systemic background. They suggest that 'a Battle of Europeanization' had begun on the Rim. The East Baltic peoples remained unaffected by the western trend, possibly under some form of Russian dominance.⁵

⁴ For the so called *kaiserlose Zeit* (Schiller) see e.g. Herbert Grundmann, *Wahlkönigtum, Territorialpolitik und Ostbewegung im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert*, Gebhardt Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte, 5, München 1988 pp. 85-259.

⁵ For introductions to the scholarly discourse, see e.g. Sawyer, B. & P., *Medieval Scandinavia. From Conversion to Reformation circa 800-1500*, Minneapolis 1993 pp. 49-128; Kahk, J. & Tarvel, E., *An Economic History of the Baltic Countries*, Stockholm 1997; Piskorski, Jan M. [ed.] *Historiographical Approaches to Medieval Colonization of East Central Europe*, New York 2002.

In 1143 Lübeck for the first time was integrated in the German state system; from 1158 directly under the Saxon duke Henry the Lion. It was to serve as the gateway for further core area expansion. Towards the end of the 12th century, the Germans circumvented the old Nordic powers by seeking direct contacts with Gotland and ‘the great lord of Novgorod’. The diagonal route via Gotland became the highway across the Baltic, leaving Denmark and Sweden in backwaters. Christian mission went hand in hand with commercial expansion, taking the shape of crusades around 1200, which led to the formation of German governed regimes in Livonia and Prussia, ending up in the federation that often – somewhat misleadingly – is named the Teutonic Order State. Denmark and Sweden tried to compensate for this by taking control over the Finnish Gulf and Neva estuary, a project that Sweden withheld well into the 18th century.⁶

1225-1375: Core area victory/Europeanization of the Rim (implementation phase)

Around 1225 Lübeck and a group of wealthy cities in the German core area, in firm alliance with Gotland and the newly founded Riga, tried to open a new route into Russia along the Daugava. For a while Novgorod seemed to be sidestepped but came back around 1260, when Russia had fallen under Mongol control.

Around the Baltic things European were implemented. Most towns and cities that exist today were founded according to West European patterns, organised as burgher communities led by burgomaster and council, under particular urban laws and trade privileges. Churches were founded and parishes were roped in, forming a basic structure that still remains. Between the churches and leading to the towns, the fundamental inland route system was laid out.

In Northern Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and the so called Order state central power was organised with means of enforcement by which the country could be run even against the will of its inhabitants. The monuments of state formation on all sides of the Baltic, are castles, most of them today in ruins. On the southern coast of the Sea, Vends and Pruzzi disappeared as nations, probably not due to genocide, but to an economic policy that made them Germanise.

⁶ E.g. Benninghofen, F., *Der Orden der Schwertbrüder*, Köln & Graz 1965; Urban, W., *The Teutonic Knights*, London & Pennsylvania 2003; Blomkvist 2005 pp. 279-678.

The establishment of central power and social differentiation into estates allowed for agricultural expansion, which could be linked to the international trade network, and it allowed for a social class of *Junkers* to establish manors and take control of a major part of the production. The entire southern and eastern coast of the Baltic became great exporters of grain. Freeman were gradually suppressed into *leibeigenschaft* (serfdom): this classical *ancienne regime* inequality was upheld into the 19th and 20th century, remembered with nostalgia by some and hatred by others.⁷

Behind the World-system horizon Russia had fallen under the Mongol Khanate. Another great power was developed by the Lithuanians around Kernave and Vilnius. Both these were pre-European in nature, chiefly built up by network associations, akin to the old Viking system.

1375-1525: Crisis in the Core area/Emancipation of the Rim

In 1375 the west European expansion had reached full success: the Hanseatic League ruled the waves from Novgorod to London; *Platdeutsch* was spoken everywhere; a Mecklenburg dynasty sat in Sweden; the Order state prepared new advances against the Lithuanians. But in 1386 Grand Duke Jagiello of Lithuania married Princess Jadwiga of Poland, accepted Catholicism and ascended to the Polish throne. This *Krakauer Hochzeit* immediately formed an East European great power, which in 1410 delivered a serious blow to further ideas of German *Drang nach Osten* at the battle of Tannenberg (Grünwald). The Order state began to decline and in 1525 Prussia fell in the hands of Poland.⁸

Another union was forming in Scandinavia. Applying the dynastic principles of *regimen regale* Margaret, princess of Denmark, queen of Norway, laid claims on all three kingdoms for her son Olav. When he however died at the age of 17, she carried the project through for her nephew Bogislav of Pommerania, renamed him Erik (after Sweden's national saint) and saw him crowned in Kalmar 1397 as joint king of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. Another great power had been founded in the North. After the death of Margaret in 1412, Erik began a forceful centralization policy around Öresund – where he thought to outmatch the Hanse

⁷ Niitemaa, V., *Die undeutsche Frage in der Politik der Livländischen Städte im Mittelalter*, Helsinki 1949; Blomkvist, N. & Lindström, T. [eds], *The Significant Detail*, Visby 2007.

⁸ Löwener, M. [ed.], *Die „Blüte“ der Staaten des östlichen Europas im 14. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 2004. Cf. e.g. Rowell, S.C., *Forging a Union? Some reflections on the early Jagiellonian Monarchy*. *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 1, Vilnius 1996 pp. 6-21; Gudavičius, E., *Lithuania's Road to Europe*. *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 2, Vilnius 1997.

by inviting the Dutch. However dissatisfied groups in Sweden revolted in 1434 and several times again until Sweden eventually left the union in 1521.⁹

Also in Russia a slumbering giant was slowly awakening in the shape of Muscovy. The fall of Byzantium in 1453 had provided an opportunity to boast it as the *defensor* of Orthodoxy, the marriage of Ivan III to Byzantine heiress Zôe and the claim to be a ‘third Rome’ provided arguments for the assumption of imperial status. Freeing itself from the Mongolian hegemony, Muscovy gathered the Russian lands, reaching Novgorod in 1478.¹⁰ Czarist Russia entered the game over the Baltic with high political ambitions corresponding to the assumed exalted profile.

Meanwhile, the European continent had been shaken by a grave demographic setback in the latter part of the 14th century, followed by the so called agrarian crisis, which changed the balance between feudal land hegemony and urban proto-capitalism.¹¹ The Lotharingian corridor lost momentum as a new core area was forming along Europe’s Atlantic coast, when the first phase of expansion overseas was entered in the 15th century. Much closer to this new core area, the Baltic Rim was drawn more intimately into its spell, chiefly by being penetrated by Dutch merchants. The Hanse declined as Poland and Livonia became the chief purveyors of grain to the Low Countries.¹² By the end of the period several nations – basically the ones butting on the Atlantic and Baltic coasts – cut their ties with Rome, assuming the Protestant reform.¹³

To sum up Europeanization, Catholic ethics had been implemented everywhere in western Europe together with an unsurpassed system of individual control, which the Protestant churches were to preserve; it was holding ground formidably up until World War II. For elite groups the church had gradually become an arena, where it was necessary to appear, and a medium through which one could achieve goals – economical, political, social as well as

⁹ Linton, M., Margareta. Nordens drottning 1375-1412, Stockholm 1997; Larsson, L-O, Kalmarunionens tid. Från drottning Margareta till Kristian II, Stockholm 2003.

¹⁰ Stökl, G., Russische Geschichte, Stuttgart 1965 pp. 136-229; for a brief synthesis cf. e.g. Poe, M.T., Den ryska tiden i världshistorien, Stockholm 2005 pp. 55-65.

¹¹ Tuchman, B.W., A Distant Mirror, New York 1978 is still the most readable survey of the 14th century collapse of western Europe.

¹² E.g. van Winter, J.M. & al., The Interactions of Amsterdam and Antwerp with the Baltic Region 1400-1800, Leiden 1983; Dollinger, P., La Hanse (XIIIe – XVIIe siècles), Paris 1964 pp. 349-461.

¹³ E.g. Westman, K.B., Reformationens genombrottsår i Sverige, Stockholm 1918; Joachimsen, P., Die Reformation als Epoche der deutschen Geschichte, München 1951; Pettegree, A. [ed.], The Early Reformation in Europe, Cambridge 1992; Pettegree, A. [ed.], The Reformation World, London 2000.

spiritual or cultural. In Early Modern times the secular church – Catholic as well as Protestant – was somehow incorporated as an element of the State. The Papacy declined together with the various spiritual orders. A culture border was cemented between western Europe and the eastern Orthodoxy.

3. The second change qualitative – Globalization

A prelude 1525-1675: Atlantic Europe goes for the World

A new secular growth cycle took off in the early 15th century from Portugal and Spain to Holland and England, as new sea going ship-types started to penetrate non-European islands and continents. The leading entrepreneurs made enormous profits and gradually emerged as a particular class of merchant capitalists. Early Modern colonial expeditions were more than ever joint ventures between church and trade, but now often also with an understanding from the state. Pagan souls were still to be saved, their land and particular resources was considered to be a fair compensation, and the state could provide soldiers, as well as protect the conquests through emerging diplomacy and international law.¹⁴

The former core area across the Continent stayed in its previous forms, until parts of it more or less imploded under the burden of wars; western Germany, northern Italy and the eastern Mediterranean sank back in semi-peripheral functions, whereas the Baltic Rim became the purveyor of all kinds of necessities for the transoceanic expansion, ship masts, hemp, tar, iron, copper, food stuffs, you name it. Öresund became one of the hotspots of World trade. In 1560 Livonia, the last component of the Order state, collapsed. Surrounding powers rallied to grab a share; Sweden and Poland were most successful. The possibility of these two powers joining forces occurred for a moment when Sigismund Vasa was chosen king of Poland, as well as inherited the Swedish crown, but fell after a few years due to structural differences and poor statesmanship – Sweden by that time was thoroughly Lutheran, whereas Poland had remained chiefly Catholic.¹⁵

¹⁴ E.g. Bitterli, U., *Cultures in Conflict. Encounters between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492-1800*, Cambridge 1993.

¹⁵ E.g. Frost, R.I., *Obsequious Disrespect: the Problem of Royal Power in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth under the Vasas, 1587-1668*, in: Butterwick, R. [ed.], *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in European Context C. 1500-1795*, New York 2001 pp. 150-71; Andersson, L. [ed.], *The Vasa Dynasty in the Baltic Region. Politics, Religion and Culture 1560-1660*, Kalmar 2003; c.f. e.g. Dygo, M., Gawlas, S. & Grala, H. [eds], *Ostmitteleuropa im*

However all the countries of the Rim were growing economically as well as demographically. 'It is hoped here, second to God's help, that this will become the West Indies of the Swedes, every bit as good for the righteous people [= the Swedes] as [the West Indies are] to the king of Spain', a Swedish nobleman wrote in 1635, upon the information that silver had been traced in Lapland.¹⁶ In 1618 what was to become the thirty years war had broken out in the Habsburg Empire, assuming the character of a religious show-down. First Denmark, then Sweden – with considerably more success – interfered to defend the Protestant powers, and were thereby fighting the war for the Atlantic core area.¹⁷

Czarist Russia continued her effort to reach the World seas, under repeated wars with Sweden and Poland-Lithuania, with little success so far; but parallel the colonisation frontier began penetrating into Siberia reaching the Pacific Ocean, where Ochotsk was founded in 1649. The pay off for this effort took centuries. But already in this period her leaders adopted a policy to catch up with western technology and administrative know-how and a colony of Westerners was established in Moscow. However Russia's structures were generally very negative to change, causing friction at every instance, and she continued to be ruled as a rather harsh empire.¹⁸

During the latter part of the 16th century the Atlantic core area fell apart according to religious preferences when counter-reformation stopped the spread of Protestantism in Spain, Portugal and France.¹⁹ From then on, momentum was with the North Sea powers. It was among them Europe for a second time caused the conditions of life to change on a general level. It occurred in the 18th century. Why then? And why in the North Sea area?

The making of a Global World-system and liquidation of l'ancienne regime

14.-17. Jahrhundert – eine Region oder Region der Regionen? Warszawa 2003; Roberts, M., The Swedish Imperial Experience 1560-1718, Cambridge 1979.

¹⁶ Carl Bonde to Axel Oxenstierna, quoted after Awebro, K., Kyrklig verksamhet i Silbojokk, in: Awebro & al., Silvret från Nasafjäll, Riksantikvarieämbetet, Stockholm 1989 p. 67.

¹⁷ Landberg, H. & al., Det kontinentala krigets ekonomi. Studier i krigsfinansieringen under svensk stormaktstid. Studia Historica Upsaliensia XXXVI, Uppsala 1971; Sandström, Å., Mellan Torneå och Amsterdam. En undersökning av Stockholms roll som förmedlare av varor i regional och utrikeshandel 1600-1650, Stockholm 1990.

¹⁸ Stökl 1965 pp. 229-330; Poe 2005 pp. 77-89. See also Hellie, R., Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy, Chicago 1971.

¹⁹ Wallerstein 1974 pp. 66-129, 164-221. Cf. e.g. Harbison, E.H., The Age of Reformation, Ithaca N.Y 1963; Pierson, P., Commander of the Armada: the seventh duke of Medina Sidonia, New Haven 1989.

A classical theory launched by Max Weber suggests that the capitalist spirit was a function of protestant ethics, notably Calvinism.²⁰ This may be true, but it's fair to say that the amalgamation of *ecclesia* and *mercatura* in medieval times saw it coming.

For two hundred years wealth had been accumulating in Holland, England and some adjacent tracts, through trade and resource exploitation on a global scale, when around 1750 a new radical *change qualitative* began in their midst. A much discussed series of breakthroughs hooked into each other, that were to re-shape not only the western European core and semi-peripheries, but virtually the whole World; again a few remainders may suffice:

- application of scientific methods on industrial production, beginning in England and gradually spreading in western Europe;
- productivity raise and sinking prices revolutionising world trade, organised by the North Sea core area and secured by colonial penetration of Africa, the Near East, and India;
- technology spill-over on transportation making exchange with other continents more reliable (steamships) and opening up inland districts (railways);
- industry shaken by recurrent crises of over-production, with no social security for workers, their concentration to factories and suburbs generating new political polarisation;
- 'bourgeois' revolutions in North America (1776) and France (1789); both occurring in semi-peripheries, drawing from enlightenment philosophy and reacting against *l'ancienne regime* privileges;
- the new social and political issues amalgamated into the principles of ethno-nationalism and democracy, however meeting conservative resistance claiming nationalism for its own interest, leading to the formation of political parties on the 'left' to 'right' scale, parliamentarism, public opinion through media;
- all moulding into a new way of life, which spread over Europe, reaching the Baltic around 1840/60.

Again some unintended interaction between *per se* autonomous factors had mutilated into *change qualitative*. Europe's global control was already established on the basis of conventional – in essence medieval – technology, but its forging into a global World-system was closely dependent of the industrial revolution. Its ideological background and practical realization – as I see it, the breakthrough of rational thought and industrial factory production – may both be seen as movements of liberation directed against the totalitarianism brought about by the unholy alliance of *ecclesia* and *mercatura*, which had remained fairly intact all through the 17th century,

²⁰ Weber, M., *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London 1930.

even though not longer governed from Rome, but administered between bankers in the North Sea core area and several metropolises of absolute monarchy.²¹

The epoch ended in a kind of *finale grande* as the French revolution mutilated into the Napoleonic wars. The paradox occurred that the freed forces of democracy were mobilised into an effort to create an empire of a very ancient type (akin to that of Charlemagne) – indeed a confusion of ideas. But Napoleon was defeated by another quite unholy alliance between core area and eastern empires. Even so the following conservative peace arrangements established at the Vienna Congress in 1815 were actually labelled a Holy alliance.²²

1675-1825: North Sea core area expansion/Internal reorganisation on the Rim

Back again to the Baltic. As the North Sea core area organized a global World-system, the Baltic Rim was drawn into its mechanisms. According to a Dutch saying the Baltic was the mother of trades. The Dutch and the British took a lively interest in the political development on the Rim, endeavouring to balance the indigenous powers.²³

Sweden's claim of *dominium maris Baltici* was ended by its defeat in the Great northern war of 1700-21, which gave Russia access to the Sea, and marked the beginning of an intense reform effort under Peter the great, very much inspired by the Netherlands.²⁴ The other Baltic Rim great power of the past, Poland, suffered an even worse fate than Sweden. In the period 1772-95 it was divided three times by its neighbours and wiped out from the political map, whereby Prussia emerged as a major contender to Russia.²⁵ Both new great powers were imperial in their structure, whereas Sweden and Denmark began new careers as small trading nations, soon accompanied by Norway.

The transformation is well exemplified by the romantic poet and history professor Erik Gustaf Geijer, sprung from a proto-industrial small scale ironworks with a sound interest in

²¹ My chief sources of inspiration for these observations has been Ashton, T.S., *The Industrial Revolution 1760-1830*, London 1962 and Aron, R., *Main Currents in Sociological Thought 1*, London 1968.

²² E.g. Hobsbawm, E., *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*, London 1962; Bergeron, L., *France Under Napoleon*, Princeton 1981.

²³ E.g. Chance, J.F., *England and Sweden in the time of William III and Queen Anne*, *Engl. Hist. Review*, London 1901; Grönroos, H., *England, Sverige och Ryssland 1719-1721*, *Finsk Hist. Tidskr.* 1931; Behre, G., *Underrättelseväsen och diplomati. De diplomatiska förbindelserna mellan Sverige och Storbritannien*, Göteborg 1965.

²⁴ Voltaire's *Histoire de Charles XII* (first published in 1731) still remains a remarkably fresh introduction to the rise of Russia on the cost of Sweden.

²⁵ E.g. Roberts 1979; Rosenberg, H., *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1660-1815*, Boston 1966.

practical matters, which had been highly stimulated by a journey to England in 1809-10. In contemporary letters, later quoted in his memoirs, he lively and knowledgeably describes the new way of life he saw developing there. And then, in 1825, during a journey through a still pastoral Sweden, he comes across its first impact here, the building of *Göta kanal* – an internal waterway from the Baltic to Skagerak construed by the prominent British canal-builder Thomas Telford: masonry, locks, even wheelbarrows and sledgehammers, everything Geijer sees impresses him. ‘You can call it a technological institute that’s up to measure’, he cries. But there is one thing he cannot stand. When he tried to visit the machine works at Motala he is met by a sign forbidding anyone to do so without due permission. ‘This was the first Swedish version I’ve seen of that “No admittance here!” etc. that so often held me back in England.’²⁶

1825-1975: emergence of North Atlantic World dominance/Baltic Rim implementation

In the period to come industrial revolution gradually spread from the North Sea core area over the European continent together with an unintended chain reaction questioning royal, noble and ecclesiastic prerogatives, all reaching the Baltic Rim in around 1840/60. Industrialisation caused a demographic boom in western Europe, leading to mass migrations from the countryside to urban areas, and later on to ‘empty continents’. The ideas of enlightenment continued to spread over the European continent, small peoples boasted their rights to form their own national polity, whereas shattered groups of people endeavoured to join in an ‘imagined’ nation; the medieval society of estates was gradually replaced by the notion of the upper, middle and working classes.

Towards the end of the 19th century a new wave of technical innovations followed, featuring the use of electricity, the combustion engine and so forth, all furthering more mechanised production and swifter, more reliable communications, which initiated a partly new series of chain reactions in the 20th century. The two World Wars were characterised by new technology and industrial perspectives; they were largely challenges by semi-peripheral empires against the North Sea governed World-system.

After World War I the North American east coast joined the North Sea core area. The allied victories in World wars I and II confirms this; the first one liquidated three semi-

²⁶ Geijer, E.G., *Minnen* (first published in 1834), reprinted together with Ödmann, S., Hågkomster, Stockholm 1962 p. 163; for the Göta kanal project and Motala Machine works as Sweden’s first modern industrial plant, see Nyström, B., *The Göta Canal*, in: Hult, J. & Nyström, B. [eds.], *Technology & Industry. A Nordic Heritage*, Canton Ma 1992 pp. 192-96.

peripheral Empires, the second stopped still semi-peripheral terror-states to take a short cut into global control; the Cold war was another struggle between a still rather imperial Soviet and a North Atlantic World-system. Development on the Baltic Rim saw recurring duels between the Russian and reappearing German empires, and their consecutive reconstructions and/or collapses in 1917/18, 1933/45 and 1989, by which minor nations sometimes disappeared and sometimes were resurrected.²⁷

4. A Sea of Tensions Reflecting an Ever-changing World

During the second millennium AD the Baltic became a sea of tensions, a border area between two very different kinds of society, which conveniently have often been labelled ‘East’ and ‘West’, a dichotomy that doesn’t communicate much meaning. One way to describe it is the following.

Around 1100 a Catholic World-system had begun to form in the ‘Lotharingian’ corridor, tying northern Italy to the Low Countries. The joint forces of *ecclesia* and *mercatura* expanded into the Baltic Rim, drawing each of its countries into the disciplinarian system of the reform papacy and the emerging commodity market of the Hanse – with the exception of Russia that was caught up in a totally different setting. This suggests that the major tension, which began to be loaded into the Baltic at that time, was that between a new, more efficient system that spread easily by means of sea communications, and a more simplistic old system that it couldn’t beat in the vast inland territories.

In the 16th and 17th centuries the Catholic World-system core area found itself overshadowed by the European Atlantic coast, which formed a much larger Global World-system. The gradual shift of power from the southern to the northern part of the Atlantic coasts of Europe may have something to do with counter-reformation succeeding within top-heavy monarchies in Portugal, Spain and France, whereas the Netherlands and United Kingdom developed constitutions answering to the interest of capitalism – in the Netherlands a republic, in the UK a constitutional monarchy. When in the 18th century, capitalism joined forces with the industrial revolution a new *change qualitative* occurred, the impact of which still governs the world. It reached the Baltic Rim in the middle of the 19th century, drawing it closely into core

²⁷ For all this see e.g. Kirby, D., *The Baltic World 1772-1993: Europe’s Northern Periphery in an Age of Change*, London 1995; Klinge, M., *Östersjövärlden*, Stockholm 1994; Gerner, K. & Karlsson, K-G., *Nordens Medelhav. Östersjöområdet som historia, myt och project*, Stockholm 2002.

area activities – in the 20th century one might claim that its western countries actually formed part of that rather dynamic and growing core. But again it failed to make a more profound impact on Russia. One wonders why.

One factor which I have followed in this paper is the duality between empires and World-systems, in other words between socioeconomic organisation based on coercion and market mechanisms respectively. I'll have to make clear that the difference is one of shades; no society exists that is purely one or the other. The Catholic World-system emerged as a revolution within an Empire, the German-Roman one, which imploded and ceased to function as such, as Europe found its still extant shape in the Middle Ages, and on the Capitalist World-system that grew out of that in the Early Modern and Modern periods. The German-Roman 'Habsburg' Empire was reconstructed outside of the World-system core area – in eastern Europe; whereas Russia developed into another empire, and finally Prussia into a third one. Around 1900 the Baltic indeed was a sea of tensions, within which the World-system core area more or less directly bordered towards two rather autocratic Empires.

Europeanization came to the Rim in three steps which may be called *expansion*, *implementation* and *crisis* by an agent of Europeanization, but *resistance*, *acceptance* and *emancipation* by the indigenous re-agent. Similarly it was drawn into the Globalization process in consecutive steps that with a slight variance may be called *expansion*, *break through* (industrial revolution) and *implementation* by an observer in Amsterdam or London, but *adjustment*, *integration* and *further integration* from a Baltic Rim point of view. The processes resemble each other but I cannot see that they are identical. The Baltic Rim entered them under different preconditions – as full periphery under Europeanization, but as semi-periphery in Globalization.

Also each of these phases seems to be absolved in a century and a half. Do I seriously believe in such regularities? To be honest, I don't know. But I do know that economic historians from time to time discuss a phenomenon called the secular wave, in which economic ups and downs are measured in two-three human generations, and where so called Kondratieff cycles of 60 or 75 years are taken seriously. Braudel for one did, suggesting 1350, 1650, 1817 and 1974 as years in which the secular wave was culminating. I'm inclined to accept it too, at least as a justification for a medievalist to discuss the present and beyond.

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What was historically *new* in medieval Europeanization wasn't feudalism, trade or state formation, but rational, scientifically conducted disciplining (ethics and moral). What was really *new* in modern Globalization wasn't capitalism, colonialism or triangular trade, but rational, scientifically conducted production and distribution. In other words: churches were the factories of the Middle Ages; factories the churches of the modern. Both had the power to organise much longer chains-of-exchange than before, multiplying accumulation in the core area, which however spread with economic growth and qualitative improvement also to the peripheries. Hence we have found recurrent examples of 'peripheral revenge'. What about the future?

Globalization hasn't replaced Europeanization; both are with us now. The Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Maastricht treaty certainly released a new wave of Europeanization. Even if the *original* process of Europeanization took almost three medieval centuries to fulfil, until the last Semigalian had been Christianised; there are quite many similarities in the modern repetition, which suggest that the Middle Ages remain as a pattern, which is not to be neglected even in the 21st century. In the early 1990s the famous *Blue Banana* stretching over the Continent between London and Milan, was expected to be the great winner of European cooperation. It's a mere copy of the Lotharingian corridor.

But how does this new European house fit into the *global* village of the future? Today's core area may still stretch over the North Atlantic, but tendencies are already strong that it's regrouping around the Pacific. We may well have to see the core area of a future global World-system wander around Tellus making its next halt in East Asia. What will happen then in the EU and USA? Would the military-industrial complex de-masque itself and come out as an empire? And which course will Russia chose? And on the Baltic Rim – would economic power shift from Germany and Scandinavia to the emerging 'tiger economies' of the East Baltic?

Having caused two major qualitative changes during the second millennium, Europe now runs the risk of becoming a periphery. But another scenario is also feasible where emerging ultra-fast communications may spread the functions of economic hegemony all over the world, with the effect that the horizontal (or spatial) division of labour would transform into a more vertical one, where core area, semi- and full periphery will co-exist at the same places in a world-wide class- or caste-like system. Also incitements for further growth may loose momentum, in a world were the chains-of-exchange cannot grow further? And what will happen

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when the oil resources run dry? The climate runs amok? Nuclear technology falls in the hands of desperate terrorists? I had better stop!

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