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ENGLAND'S TRADE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE NETHERLANDS (XV-XVI CENTURIES)

Abstract: England's trading diplomatic relations with the Netherlands are very important from the history of the XV-XVI centuries. A major contribution to the development of trade diplomacy has been made by the merchants of adventurers' companies of London, York, Newcastle, Norwich, Saulsbury, Midland Merchant-adventure Company. Firstly, there was a trade diplomacy that was followed by the diplomacy itself. According to the country's concerns, the English merchants took part in the diplomatic negotiations with the Netherlands, by the order of the king, they performed secret tasks and also engaged in intelligence activities.

The purpose of the work is to show what the trade diplomatic relations with the Netherlands were, and what role merchants and trade diplomats played in the development of the country's diplomacy.

The source of this period - The Acts of Court of the Mercer's Company, contains the most notable documents that we have studied about this problem.

Key words: Merchants Adventurers, companies, ordonances, resident, Sinkson fair.

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Introduction

The purpose of the work is to show what the trade diplomatic relations with the Netherlands were, and what role merchants and trade diplomats played in the development of the country's diplomacy. The source of this period - *The Acts of Court of the Mercer's Company*, contains the most notable documents that we have studied about this problem.

Methods

During the study process we applied XVI century sources - The Acts of Court of the Mercer's Company (1), As well as the works of English economic development, foreign trade and trade companies that belong to the following authors: Bolton J. (4), Кенингем У. (13), Ashley D (2), Brabrook E (5), Bridbary A (6), Bowden P.J (7), Carus-Wilson E. M. (8,9,10), Gray E (11), Growson P (12), Morton A. L (18). Postan M.M. (20, 21), Power E.E.(22), Ramsay P.(23), Steel A. (24), Skazkin S.D., Chistozvonov A. N. (25), Thrupp S. (26)

Results

The study of these sources allowed us to make the following conclusions:

The company of merchant-adventurers of England had a manager-resident of the overseas in the Netherlands, the same diplomatic representative (resident names include: William Keckston, John Pickering, John Piper, and John Etwell). The direct duty of the resident was to control trade, rights of merchants and fulfillment of the royal authority's tasks. The resident had the so-called assistants, merchant-adventurers of different cities, who were elected by 12 or 13 men in each trade season. English merchants enjoyed the trust of the king and therefore took part in diplomatic negotiations with the King and Lord-Chancellor. The merchants performed the king's secret tasks and intelligence functions. According to their interests, they were actively involved in drawing up the regulatory ordonances adopted by the royal government and the Parliament on customs duties and trade issues. The connection of bourgeoisie with the king becomes obvious; this was due to a pre-eminent position in exchange for the patronage of the king. Diplomatic relations and

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diplomacy emerged from the trade diplomacy in England.

Discussion

England's trading diplomatic relations with the Netherlands are very important from the history of the XV-XVI centuries. A major contribution to the development of trade diplomacy has been made by the merchants of adventurers' companies of London, York, Newcastle, Norwich, Saulsberry, Midland Merchant-adventure Company. Firstly, there was a trade diplomacy that was followed by the diplomacy itself. According to the country's concerns, the English merchants took part in the diplomatic negotiations with the Netherlands, by the order of the king, they performed secret tasks and also engaged in intelligence activities.

It was clear that the development of the UK's trade diplomacy must have been associated with the development of the cloth industry and trade, which in turn contributed to the construction of a naval fleet and the colonial expansion of England.

In the XVI century, England developed trade with various states: Norway, France, Prussia, North and Baltic Sea States (4:14-25). In 1519-1522, the English were trading in Seville, Lisbon, San Sebastian, Bayonne, Kale, Danzig, San Domingo (13: 365). In the second decade of the 15th century, the Englishmen found a direct way to trade in Iceland. Earlier, the English goods were imported there by the mediators – the Norwegians (3: 29).

From England they exported: cloth, tin, lead, bread, but the most profitable was trading with cloth (15: 188).

The English were particularly active in the Netherlands, where seasonal fairs were organized. Here in the Netherlands the English merchants had their representative, the so-called resident - the ruler of the overseas, who was responsible for the tasks of the king, to protect the rights of English traders in the Netherlands, solicitation before the king on behalf of the English merchants in relation to particular demands (1: 31). In a word, he performed diplomatic responsibilities.

It became clear from sources that, in the Netherlands, William Keckston was elected resident in 1466, in 1487 - John Pickering, John Piper in 1491, and John Etwell in 1493.

The ruler of the overseas was mostly elected from the company of the merchant-adventurers of London (this company was founded in 1407. The merchant-adventurer is a wanderer, traveling merchant; it was one of the richest companies), and the assistant residents were elected among the adventurers of York, Norwich, Newcastle, Saulsberry and Midland besides London.

The 1519 document tells us that for the proper organization of trade in order not to violate the dignity of the king in the places (the Archduke of

Austria, the Duke of Burgundy), where the merchants of their companies were trading, they should have named and chosen 12 wise, wealthy, trusted people from 8 London City companies, while 4 – from other cities of England. Those who were negligent would be obliged to pay a fine of 20 pounds. The following individuals were named as assistants: William Bale, John Allen, William Bromwel, Robert Bailey, Nicholas Lambrecht, John Radston, John Johnson, Paul Witby, William Kuray, John Blackstone, William Hert and John Collsell (1: 477-478). These must have been the adventurers of different cities-I.B.

The letter dated 1522 also gives us information about the assistants of the ruler of the overseas.

Before the start of the summer trading season, they requested from Barrow to send the assistants of the ruler of the overseas. The company of the merchant-adventurers elected 13 people as assistants. Here's their list: Richard Reynolds and Robert Warren – the mercers (dealers in textile fabrics), Robert Milker (glassman), John Clarke – manufacturer, Robert Shit (tailor), John Long (a trader with salt), Thomas Snodland (a fishmonger), Thomas Anderby (a trader of leather), Robert Whitefield from York, John Marshall from Norwich, William Web from Saulsberry, John Davens from Midland, John Prest the treasurer (1 :558-559).

As it turned out, the assistants of the ruler of the overseas were elected before the start of the trading season, who had to be reliable people and protect the interests of the state.

The resident was obliged to observe how the English merchants from the overseas obeyed the ordonnances of Parliament, confirmed by the letter sent to the overseas ruler William Keckston, dated 1467: „Please, be sure to execute the order of the Parliament in the overseas where you are staying (in Bruges-I. B.), observe this act that no points have been violated by the merchants” (1: 285). The case concerned the temporary prohibition of trade on the lands of the Duke of Burgundy. The ruler of the overseas should not have allowed the merchants to depart trade, i.e. they must obey the Parliament's decision.

English merchants performed the secrets of the king in the overseas as well. Through them, in 1485, the King Richard III (1483-1485) learned that King of France Charles VIII (1483-1493) was supplying the rebels in England with money and arms and at the same time intended to invade the country. In this regard, they discussed this issue at the merchant-adventurers' meeting and decided that the merchants should be given money to buy weapons in order to protect the king” (1: 80).

Apparently, the company of merchant-adventures was ready to assist the king in purchasing weapons to be used in the conditions of invasion.

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The document of 1487 is also interesting: on behalf of merchant-adventurers, a letter was sent to the ruler of the overseas, John Pickering, in which they thanked him for his effective actions and promotion of trade. The letter also told about the rumors spread in England as if the English merchants and their goods were in danger in Dunkirk and in other places of Flanders. In the same letter, they also informed that King Henry VII's order was sent to the sheriffs and other officials that were read at the London Square and its suburbs so that the subordinates of the Roman Emperor (merchants) not to be arrested with the threat of death penalty and their goods not to be damaged or stolen (1: 298).

Two things are clear from this source: the first - if there was a danger to the English merchants in the overseas, in this case - in Flanders, the ruler must have peacefully settled the situation. Second, the royal government was interested in trading with the Roman Divine Emperor, trying to restore trade relations through diplomacy and not to allow the violation of the rights of subordinates in England. This is confirmed with the threat of a strict execution by the king.

The resident of the overseas, the resident had the right to take certain decisions independently. This is confirmed with the following:

In the document of 1489 we read "on February 25, English vessels returned from Bamas (Autumnal) market, we learned that some merchants were arrested and following people were fined: Thomas Goldhurst - 100 Marks, Thomas Bickson - 17 pounds of silver, Sir William Wempage - 300 Marks". (1: 202). The king sent a letter to the ruler of the overseas asking to clarify the situation and to take the decision whether they would pay the fine or not.

English merchants were also obliged to fulfill intelligence duty.

For example, on May 7, 1491, a resident of a merchant-adventurers' company, a British diplomat John Pickering was sent a letter in which he was informed that in London, there was a discussion about sending English vessels to Sinkson (summer market) fair in Barrow. By the order of King Henry VII, he had to send smart and reliable people (traders) and to have secret missions to understand the position of Ghent, Flanders and Barrow, and also to know exactly whether the Roman Divine Emperor Friedrich III would arrive there or not. They had to find out all this and follow the king's orders as well as to accelerate collecting information for His Excellence (1: 215).

This is a very fervent message. The merchants performed the king's secret tasks. They were directly responsible for the intelligence functions. The connection of bourgeoisie with the king becomes obvious; this was due to a pre-eminent position in exchange for the patronage of the king.

The merchant's business activities revealed that the Roman Divine Emperor's military forces intended to arrive in Brabant, Holland and New Zealand. All this would create a danger for the English merchants, because the political relationship between England and the Roman Divine Empire was aggravated. For this reason, the King forbade English merchants traveling to the Sinkson (summer market) fair.

As noted above, the ruler of the overseas, the resident, was a diplomatic representative of English businessmen in the Netherlands who was responsible for protecting their interests. If the merchant was to be detained, confiscated or threatened to be attacked by the offender, the resident was obliged to inform the authorities of the Kingdom of England and take the appropriate decisions.

For example, in the letter of 1497, a resident John Pickering reported that Scotland was expected to attack, so the royal government was demanding military ships to protect the merchant vessels of England.

In addition to the diplomatic negotiations the ruler of the overseas - the resident was required to control the terms of holding fairs so that it could not be possible to trade after the end of its term. At the same time, the merchants should take the money of the sold goods on time and no amount of money should have been left untaken. He also controlled that there was no speculation of merchants because it would cause loss of buyers in the Netherlands.

The ruler of the overseas was also obliged to keep track of merchants that they did not break the rules. In particular, not to play cards and other gambling games, not to stay in taverns after 9 pm. Otherwise, they had to pay a fine.

In the source we have found the references that confirm the participation of English merchants in diplomatic negotiations. Here are the letters of Margaret of Burgundy, in which we can read about the restoration of trade relations between England and Antwerpen (in further works these letters will be fully translated and published).

In one of the letters of May 15, 1508, Margaret of Burgundy writes to Henry VII: "We would like to greet you and invite you to trade at Antwerpen's free fair. We want that you get full benefit from all this. We wholeheartedly want to restore trade relations, friendship and relationship between you and our noble merchants. All the misunderstandings and obstacles that had been previously had to be forgotten. Please participate in trading with Antwerpen" (1: 312-313).

This letter was discussed at the merchant-adventurers' meeting where the merchants' views on trade terms were heard.

After that, a meeting and negotiation with the representative of the Antwerpen government was held. The representatives of merchant-adventurers of the company and the honorary member of the

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company, the British humanist Thomas Moore were involved in it. Negotiations ended with agreement (3: 52-54).

Depending on their interests, English merchants took part in the decisions of the Parliament on customs duties and protection of their rights both within the country and in the overseas.

That is why, on January 10, 1509, the headmasters of the merchant-adventurers of the company instructed the trustees to prepare the requirements to submit to the Parliament (bill), which would facilitate their rights and trade prosperity in the country.

There were exceptional cases when merchants disagree with the decision of the King and Parliament. For example, on February 5, 1509, London merchants learned that King Henry VIII demanded to pay the increased subsidy, which led to their dissatisfaction. It was decided to send a petition to the Parliament, demanding that the merchant-adventurers not to be levied upon more taxes than it was during King Edward IV and Henry VII's reigns (1: 347-348).

Finally, it seems that merchants have reached an agreement.

It is supposed that England's trading companies had its own manager-representative-resident in those countries with which trade relations required further research. Based on our sources we studied this issue only in the Netherlands.

Thus, the development of trade in XV-XVI centuries in England led to the development of trade diplomacy, which is indicated with the above documents.

The study of these sources allowed us to make the following conclusion:

The company of merchant-adventurers of England had a manager-resident of the overseas in the Netherlands, the same diplomatic representative (resident names include: William Keckston, John Pickering, John Piper, and John Etwell).

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English merchants enjoyed the trust of the king and therefore took part in diplomatic negotiations with the King and Lord-Chancellor. The merchants performed the king's secret tasks and intelligence functions.

According to their interests, they were actively involved in drawing up the regulatory ordinances adopted by the royal government and the Parliament on customs duties and trade issues.

The connection of bourgeoisie with the king becomes obvious; this was due to a pre-eminent position in exchange for the patronage of the king.

Diplomatic relations and diplomacy emerged from the trade diplomacy in England.

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