

Roman Czaja

PATRICIAN GUILDS IN MEDIEVAL TOWNS
ON THE BALTIC COAST¹

There is common consent among scholars that ruling elites in German medieval towns created formal groups, which were known for their long existence, own rules and regulations². The issue of patrician guilds has been relatively deeply researched with reference to South-German towns³. Moreover, scholars, who have been dealing with the Hanzeatic towns since the 19th century, have perceived the importance of guilds as a mark of social distinction of patricians. Carl F. We r h m a n n regarded the Lubeck Zirkel Guild (Ger. *Zirkel-Gesellschaft*) as a fraternity

¹ This article was written as part of the project sponsored by Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung.

² O. G. O e x l e, *Soziale Gruppen in der Ständegesellschaft: Lebesform des Mittelalters und ihre historische Wirkung*, in: *Die Repräsentation der Gruppen. Texte — Bilder — Objekte*, ed. O. G. O e x l e, A. von H ü l s e n, Göttingen 1998, pp. 9–44; i d e m, “Einung” und “Gemeinde” in der Gesellschaft des Mittelalters, in: *Die Rolle der Stadtgemeinden und bürgerlichen Genossenschaften im Hanseraum in der Entwicklung und Vermittlung des gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Gedankengutes im Spätmittelalter*, ed. J. T a n d e c k i, Toruń 2000, pp. 9–23; G. D i l c h e r, *Die genossenschaftliche Struktur von Gilden und Zünften*, in: *Gilden und Zünften. Kaufmännische und gewerbliche Genossenschaften im Frühen und Hohen Mittelalter*, ed. B. S c h w i n k ö r p e r, Sigmaringen 1985, pp. 71–111; G. F o u q u e t, *Trinkstuben und Bruderschaften — sociale Orte in den Städten des Spätmittelalters*, in: *Geschlechtergesellschaften, Zunft-Trinkstuben und Bruderschaften in spätmittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Städten*, ed. G. F o u q u e t, M. S t e i n b r i n k, G. Z e i l i n g e r, Ostfildern 2003, p. 13.

³ K. S c h u l z, *Patriziergesellschaften und Zünfte in den mittel- und oberrheinischen Bischofsstädten*, in: *Gilden und Zünfte. Kaufmännische und gewerbliche Genossenschaften im Frühen und Hohen Mittelalter*, ed. B. S c h w i n k ö r p e r, Sigmaringen 1985, pp. 311–335; W. S t ö r m e r, *Bürgerliche Korporationen im spätmittelalterlichen Bayern*, in: *Einungen und Bruderschaften in der spätmittelalterlichen Stadt*, ed. P. J o h a n e k, Köln-Weimar-Wien 1993, pp. 134–136; L. R e m l i n g, *Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte des spätmittelalterlichen Bruderschaftswesens in Franken*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 149–169; I. B a t o r i, *Das Patriziat der süddeutschen Städte*, “Die Alte Stadt. Zeitschrift für Stadtgeschichte, Stadtsoziologie und Denkmalpflege”, vol. 2, 1975, pp. 17–20.

which consolidated patrician families and emphasised their “estate” distinction — *Sie traten hervor in und mit der Absicht, nun einen eignen Kreis, gewissermassen einen besonderen Stand bilden, einen besonderen Rang einnehmen zu wollen, und natürlich einen höheren als die übrigen Bürger* — this is what the author has written to comment on the reasons for establishing the guild by patricians in 1379⁴. Historians have also indicated the existence, in other Wendish towns, of the guilds which associated merchants who traded on a specific route (Ger. *Fahrerkompagnien*), and of shooting guilds, as a corporative form in the organization of a ruling group⁵. An opinion prevailed among older generations of scholars that in large Livonian towns (Riga, Reval, Dorpat) the so called *Kindergilde*, which were established in the 14th century and towards the close of the 15th century gave birth to the so called “Blackheads Guilds” (Ger. *die Bruderschaften der Schwarzhäupter*), reflected social diversification of townspeople and separation of patricians from the rest of town society⁶. The researchers who dealt with the history of Prussian towns, in their search for guild forms in the organization of patrician families, indicated the so called Artus Houses and relating to them St. George’s guilds⁷.

⁴ C. F. Wehrmann, *Das Lübeckische Patriziat, insbesondere dessen Entstehung und Verhältnis zum Adel*, “Hansische Geschichtsblätter”, vol. 2, 1872, p. 107; idem, *Das Lübeckische Patriziat*, “Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde”, vol. 5, 1888, pp. 306–307.

⁵ H. U. Römer, *Das Rostocker Patriziat*, “Mecklenburgische Jahrbücher”, vol. 96, 1932, p. 48, 83; for the review of the historiography on the subject see: S. Dünnebeil, *Vereinigungen der städtischen Oberschicht im Hanseraum und deren Repräsentationsbedürfnis*, in: *Die Rolle der Stadtgemeinden und bürgerlichen Genossenschaften im Hanseraum in der Entwicklung und Vermittlung des gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Gedankengutes im Spätmittelalter*, ed. J. Tandecki, Toruń 2000, pp. 73–90; H. Wernicke, *Die Fahrtrichtungsgenossenschaften in den Hansestädten. Überlegungen zu ihrem Wesen und ihrer Bedeutung*, in: *Genossenschaftliche Strukturen in der Hanse*, ed. N. Jörn, D. Kattinger, H. Wernicke, Köln-Weimar-Wien 1999, pp. 123–133.

⁶ F. Amelung, G. Wrangell, *Geschichte der Revaler Schwarzhäupter*, Reval 1930; E. von Nottbeck, *Die alte Schragen der grossen Gilde*, Reval 1885; F. Bennighoven, *Rigas Entstehung und der frühhansische Kaufmann*, Hamburg 1961, pp. 95–97; H. von zur Mühlen, *Zur Führungsgeschichte der Revaler Gilden*, in: *Reval, Handel und Wandel vom 13. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. N. Angermann, W. Lenz, Lüneburg 1997, pp. 38–39; Th. Brück, *Zu den Beziehungen der Korporationen der Schwarzhäupter in den Städten Riga, Reval und Dorpat in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 181–198; idem, *Zwischen ständischer Repräsentanz und Interessenkonflikten — Bemerkungen zur Entwicklung der Grossen Gilde in Riga im ersten Drittel des 15. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Genossenschaftliche Strukturen in der Hanse*, pp. 239–271.

A fresh look at a social role of elite guilds was provided in the research conducted by Ahasver von Brandt on the Lubeck Zirkel Guild. This scholar, unlike Werhmann, did not contemplate the origins of this guild in connection with its later 15th century function, but made an effort to show its origins from the social perspective of the town of Lubeck in the second half of the 14th century. He stressed the importance of the fact that founders of the Zirkel Guild in 1479 were young merchants who originated from the families which had not been represented in the council before, yet still revealing some "aristocratic" ambition. This tendency to establish a patrician and rentier group, as well as a certain, gradually built "aristocratic" way of perceiving the ruling group had already existed, according to this scholar, at the very moment the guild was born. However, it was not until half a century later when a tendency developed (which was presumed by older generations of scholars to have originated already at the close of the 14th century) for the group of "patricians" and rentiers closed within the Zirkel Guild to play an important role in the assignment of the town council⁸.

In the 1990s further research on the Zirkel Guild and other guilds which grouped the ruling class of Lubeck was commenced by Sonja D ü n n e b e i l. She mainly focused on the social make-up and representational functions of the guilds⁹. This scholar, developing the research originated by Ahasver von Brandt, analysed financial and social standing of the Zirkel Guild members

⁷ P. Simson, *Der Artushof in Danzig und seine Brüderschaften*, Danzig 1900, pp. 309-315; G. Bender, *Der Artushof in Braunsberg*, "Mitteilungen des Erm-ländischen Kunstvereins", vol. 1, 1870, pp. 58-70; A. Semrau, *Zur ältesten Geschichte des Artushofes in Thorn*, "Mitteilungen des Copernicus Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn", vol. 28, 1920, pp. 83-92; for a critical review of the older historiography see: E. Pilecka, *Dwory Artusa w miastach pruskich. Niedostrzegane możliwości i nowe aspekty badań (Artus Houses in Prussian Towns. Unnoticed Opportunities and New Aspects of Research)*, in: "Teka Komisji Historii Sztuki", t. IX, ed. J. Poklewski, Toruń 2003, pp. 77-92.

⁸ A. v. Brandt, *Die Lübecker Knochenhaueraufstände von 1380/84 und ihre Voraussetzungen Studien zur sozialgeschichte in der zweiten Hälfte des 14. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Lübeck, Hanse, Nordeuropa. Gedächtnisschrift für Ahasver von Brandt*, ed. K. Friedland, R. Sprandel, Köln-Wien 1979, p. 150; latest on this subject see: M. Lutterbeck, *Der Rat der Stadt Lübeck im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert. Politische, personale und wirtschaftliche Zusammenhänge in einer städtischen Führungsgruppe*, Lübeck 2002, pp. 98-99.

⁹ S. D ü n n e b e i l, *Die Lübecker Zirkel-Gesellschaft. Formen der Selbstdarstellung einer städtischen Oberschicht*, Lübeck 1996; idem, *Die drei großen Kompanien als genossenschaftliche Verbindungen der Lübecker Oberschicht*, in: *Genossenschaftliche Strukturen in der Hanse*, ed. N. J ö r n, Köln-Weimar-Wien 1999, pp. 205-222.

(professional position, participation in the town council) from the beginning of its existence until 1536. This in-depth analysis allowed the author to question the argument that the Zirkel Guild was a closed and exclusive association of the Lubeck patriciate¹⁰. The members whose families were represented in the guild only once, made up to one-fourth of the whole group, whereas one-third of the guild members stemmed from the families that were represented there twice. The tendency to refuse the access to the guild by merchants from "new" families was not to be observed until the mid of the 15th century. This growing social exclusiveness of the guild contributed to the decline in the number of its members from around 55 people between 1429 and 1435 to 35–40 members in the last quarter of the 15th century. Bearing in mind the patrician character of the guild, one primarily has to take into consideration the share of councillors in the total number of its members. In general, between 1428 and 1530, around 68 per cent of councillors belonged to the guild. The Zirkel Guild enjoyed its political heyday in the 1460s and 1470s, when almost 90 per cent of the councillors were among its members. From the 1480s onwards, the number of the councillors in the guild began to diminish, while simultaneously the councillors grew more and more active in new associations: *Kaufleute-Kompanie* and *Greveraden-Kompanie*. In 1509, only a half, and in 1530 one-third of the town councillors belonged to the Zirkel Guild¹¹. Dünnebeil lays great emphasis on the social link between the council and the guild, which at times was even very close, yet she opposes the claim that the council and the Zirkel Guild were identical institutions in terms of their social makeup¹². Therefore, despite the fact that the guild members stressed their social distinction and exclusiveness, this cannot be regarded as a persistent form of the corporative organization of the ruling group. Social exclusiveness of the guild in the last quarter of the 15th century led to its loss of power in the council to younger associations. At the beginning of the 1450s, merchants from outside the ruling group, in their majority the ones being newcomers to Lubeck, founded *Gerveraden-Kompanie* and *Kaufleute-Kompanie*, whose members, from the close of the 15th century, began

¹⁰ S. Dünnebeil, *Die Lübecker Zirkelgesellschaft*, p. 127.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 136.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 144.

to gain an increasing influence on decision-making in the Council of Lubeck¹³.

Interestingly enough, three Lubeck guilds which represented merchants have got similar origins. They were all established by *homines novi*, the people from outside the ruling group who did not manage to succeed in strengthening their political influence or gain an exclusive social status until social stability was achieved. Yet one has to stress that these guilds did not manage to persistently maintain their political standing and the social role in the organization of trade in Lubeck. In the 1530s, both the Zirkel Guild, *Gerweraden-Kompanie*, and *Kaufleute-Kompanie* suspended their activity¹⁴. Sonja Dünnebeil asserts that they represent a new type of corporations which were mainly preoccupied with organizing social life, whereas religious goals were of secondary importance, and in this context she makes comparisons between Lubeck guilds and the so called *Trinkstuben* of patriciate in South-German towns¹⁵. However, it seems to be only partially justified. On the one hand, the origins of patrician guilds were generally linked to the process of elitism of ruling groups in South-German towns, which escalated in the 14th century¹⁶. Yet, on the other hand, it can be observed that in respective towns the establishing of corporative forms in the organization of ruling groups was influenced by different factors. In some towns their main social function was to represent the ruling group outside, whereas in others — to integrate the patriciate which was created by knights and townspeople¹⁷. In search for similarities between *Trinkstuben* and *Geschlechtergesellschaften* in South-German towns, and Lubeck patrician guilds, one has to point out that they emerged as a result of rivalry for power and internal differen-

¹³ S. Dünnebeil, *Die drei großen Kompanien*, p. 217; A. Graßmann, *Die Greveradenkompanie. Zu den führenden Kaufleutegesellschaften in Lübeck um die Wende zum 16. Jahrhundert*, in: *Der Hansische Sonderweg? Beiträge zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Hanse*, ed. S. Jenks and M. North, Köln-Wien 1993, pp. 109–134.

¹⁴ A. Graßmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–124.

¹⁵ S. Dünnebeil, *Die drei großen Kompanien*, p. 222.

¹⁶ G. Fouquet, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁷ L. Remling, *op. cit.*, pp. 168–170; W. Störmer, *Bürgerliche Korporationen im spätmittelalterlichen Bayern*, in: *Einungen und Bruderschaften*, p. 136; K. Schulz, *Patriziergesellschaften und Zünfte in den mittel- und oberrheinischen Bischofsstädten*, in: *Gilden und Zünfte. Kaufmännische und Gewerbliche genossenschaften im frühen und hohen Mittelalter*, ed. B. Schwinkörper, Sigmaringen 1985, pp. 311–335.

tiation within the upper stratum¹⁸. It is noteworthy that both the Zirkel Guild, *Kaufleute-Kompagnie*, and *Gerveraden-Kompanie* were founded by merchants from outside the ruling group. It also arrests one's attention that the Zirkel Guild was established during an increased influx of *homines novi* to the town council¹⁹, while *Kaufleute-Kompanie* and *Gerveraden-Kompanie* were founded the time when the merchants grouped in the Zirkel Guild gained a decisive influence on the makeup of the council. Therefore, one can assume that one of the reasons behind the policy of merchants to found guilds was a tendency to create a "pressure group" which would make it possible for them to influence the decision-making in town.

The first evidence for such associations, initially of an informal nature, dates back to the 1370s. In 1374 Johann Crispin (descending from an old Lubeck patrician family; both his brother and parents were councillors) bequested to his *sodalibus mei propie lachbroderen* — (without mentioning their names) half an ohm of wine²⁰. In 1377 Baldwin Speygeler in his will bequested to 69 people named there some wine, which was to be drunk during their feast. This group listed 17 the then councillors and 7 subsequent ones, together with 25 people representing old patrician families, 17 people of "new" patrician families, and 24 unidentified people²¹. It is interesting that Baldwin Speygeler and Gerhard and Herman Dartzow, and Johann and Heirich Meteler, all mentioned in the will, signed on the 2nd September 1379 a agreement with a Franciscan convent according to which the friars obliged themselves to hand them over the chapel in St. Catherine's Church and pray for th souls of the members of the Zirkel Guild²². Soon after that, the guild was joined by other 28

¹⁸ J. Rogge, *Geschlechtergesellschaften, Trinkstuben und Ehre. Bemerkungen zur Gruppenbildung und den Lebensordnung in den Führungsschichten mittelalterlichen Städte*, in: *Geschlechtergesellschaften*, pp. 101, 109.

¹⁹ In the first half of the 14th century, councillors from the families which were represented in the council for the first time, made up 40 per cent of the council, whereas in the 1460s and 1480s their share grew to 50 per cent. These changes could have resulted from an increased mortality rate caused by the Black Death between 1350 and 1367, see: M. Lutterbeck, *op. cit.*, pp. 42–44.

²⁰ E. Wehrmann, *Das lübeckische Patriziat*, p. 106.

²¹ G. Wegemann, *Die führenden Geschlechter Lübecks und ihre Verschwägerungen*, "Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde", vol. 31, 1949, p. 39.

²² *Lübeckisches Urkundenbuch*, vol. IV, p. 391, in addition to the mentioned ones, among the founders were also: Marquard von Dame, Eberhard Morum, Jakob Holk, Arnd van der Brugge.

people who had been listed among those receiving wine by Speygeler. It therefore can be understood that the foundation of the guild took place as a result of a separation of a part of merchants (mainly those who did not belong to patrician families) from the informal association which gathered both the people from the ruling group and merchants from the families that were not represented in the council. Finally, not deciding on the origins of the Zirkel Guild, one can admit that its foundation was not rooted in an inclination of the ruling group to stress their social exclusiveness against a wider merchant group.

There is a common belief that in Prussian towns it was company houses, also known as Artus Houses (*Artushöfe*) together with linked to them St. George's Guilds, which were of socially exclusive character²³. Elżbieta Pilecka pointed out rightly that the evaluation of a social role of those institutions was too influenced by research based on the 15th and 16th — 17th century sources, and by failure to conduct an analysis which would allow for the time factor²⁴. Nevertheless, a closer look at the history of Artus Houses and the guilds which were linked to them, indicates that we face a historical process whose functions cannot be determined explicitly, as it was determined by social and economic circumstances at a specific time and place.

The oldest credible information about company houses (the houses of merchant companies) in large Prussian towns dates back to the first half of the 14th century. In excerpts made by Peter Himmelreich (1530–1582) from the oldest account book of the Old Town of Elbing, we can track down the information, which refers to 1320, as follows: *curiae regis Artus ejusque societati ordnung gegeben*²⁵. However, it is not certain whether this name was in use then, or, perhaps, the chronicler transferred the name

²³ W. Störmer, *König Artus als aristokratisches Leitbild des späteren Mittelalters*, "Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte", vol. 35, 1972, pp. 961–962; S. Dünnebeil, *Vereinigungen der städtischen Oberschicht im Hanseraum*, p. 80 "Die Artushöfe wurden schnell zum Versammlungsort der wichtigsten (wirtschaftlich und politisch) Persönlichkeit der jeweiligen Stadt"; S. Selzer, *Artushöfe im Ostseeraum. Ritterlich-höfische Kultur in den Städten des Preußenlandes im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a. M. 1998, p. 125: "Die Artushöfe sind die Trinkstuben der Oberschicht. Fixiert und garantiert wurde die Exklusivität der Artushöfe in den Ordnungen und Statuten, die den Zugang zu den Höfen regelten".

²⁴ E. Pilecka, *op. cit.*, pp. 88–89.

²⁵ M. Toeppen, *Elbinger Antiquitäten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des städtischen Lebens im Mittelalter*, Marienwerder 1870–1871, p. 208.

which was used later to the institution he knew. For the first time in period sources the name *curia regis Artus* appears in registration of a meadow book dated by Artur Semrau from 1338²⁶. In the Major Town of Danzig, the first reference to an Artus House was made in 1350 in a land book *census in curia regis Artus*²⁷. Also, a mention of a company house *kumpenhouse* in Kulm dates back to the mid 14th century²⁸. The author of the preface to the new statute of the Thorn Artus House from 1615 dates back the origins of this institution to 1311²⁹. In the light of the information on the origins of Artus Houses in Danzig and Elbing, such early foundation of the House in Thorn seems plausible, yet the first fully credible reference on the company house comes from as late as 1384³⁰. It has to be emphasised that in the Middle Ages the Thorn House was called a company house (*Kompenhaus*), and the name Arturshof did not appear until the modern times³¹. In 1354 an Artus House in Braunsberg was mentioned³², and the first reference in sources to *coninc Arturs hof* in the Old Town of Königsberg appeared in 1369³³. It was Malbork which was the only small Prussian town where an Artus House existed³⁴. It can be seen that the origins of all company houses in Prussian towns

²⁶ The State Archives in Gdańsk, cat. N° 369, 1/123, p. 15a; A. Semrau, *Die älteste Vermessung der Bürgerwiesen in der Altstadt Elbing im Jahre 1338*, "Elbinger Jahrbuch", vol. 3, 1923, p. 116; S. Selzer, *Artushöfe*, p. 23.

²⁷ The State Archives in Gdańsk, cat. N° 300, 32/1, p. 42a; E. Keyser, *Die Baugeschichte der Stadt Danzig*, Köln-Wien 1972, p. 143.

²⁸ F. Schultz, *Die Stadt Kulm im Mittelalter*, "Zeitschrift des Westpreußischen Geschichtsvereins", vol. 23, 1888, p. 166.

²⁹ The State Archives in Toruń, the Artus Guild, N° 1, pp. 11–20; the statute issued by G. Bender, in: *Bericht über einige Verwaltungs=Angelegenheiten der Stadt-gemeinde Thorn*, Thorn 1891, pp. 43–45.

³⁰ *Liber scabinorum Veteris Civitatis Thorunensis 1363–1428* (Fontes TNT 29), ed. K. Kaczmarczyk, Toruń 1936, nr 150.

³¹ S. Selzer, *Artushöfe*, p. 31; A. Semrau, *Zur ältesten Geschichte des Artushofes in Thorn*, "Mitteilungen des Copernicus-Vereins für Wissenschaft und Kunst zu Thorn", vol. 28, 1920, pp. 83–92.

³² *Codex Diplomaticus Warmienseis*, vol. II, ed. C. P. Woelky, J. M. Saage, Mainz 1870, p. 307; F. Hippler, *Der Artushof und die St. Georgsbrüder in Braunsberg*, "Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde Ermlands", vol. 21–23, 1879–1881, p. 608.

³³ S. Selzer, *Artushöfe*, p. 26.

³⁴ J. Voigt, *Geschichte Marienburgs, der Stadt und des Haupthauses des deutschen Ritter-Ordens in Preußen*, Königsberg 1824, p. 530, the record in the supplement to the town law of 1365, *Item das burgerding sal man halden off dem koningartushofe*; W. Długokęcki, *The ruling elite of the town of Malbork in the Middle Ages*, Malbork 2004, p. 70.

go back to the first half or the beginnings of the 14th century. Yet, it is still arguable what were the origins and who were the founders of this institution. The recent claim that the major function of Artus Houses was to cultivate courtly forms of life, such as feasts, dances, music, and an organization of knightly tournaments in which merchants' sons participated, is based on the evidence from the second half of the 15th century, and it cannot be referred to the situation in the 14th century³⁵. Some scholars claim that St. George's Guilds were the first founders and proprietors of the Houses³⁶. This view, however, cannot be supported by any sources, for the first mentions of St. George's Guilds date back to the turn of the 14th century³⁷. There seems to be much more credibility in the argument that the origins of company houses should be linked to the internal organization within the Hanzeatic merchants³⁸. In the 13th century, South-German merchants, who were heading with their merchandise to the Baltic zone, in order to provide better security and more effective implementation of their religious, professional, and social goals, formed guilds, of which the ones grouping merchants from the same town were the most significant. In addition, merchants working in a foreign territory formed general guilds which linked people irrespective of their descent, i.e. *gilda communis*³⁹. Initially, guilds were founded by travelling merchants (*frequentes*) who only temporarily stayed in a foreign territory, yet the more newcomers from German towns settled down in the Baltic coastal towns, the more guild members began to originate from the merchants who lived permanently in a respective town. In a much faster and better way than in Prussian towns the above outlined process of the development of guilds took place in Livonian towns, which were incorporated into the system of the

³⁵ S. Selzer, *Artushöfe*, p. 35.

³⁶ P. Simson, *Der Artushof*, p. 15, 305; see also, S. Selzer, *Artushöfe*, pp. 94–95, who claims that: "die Gorgsbrüder... den Kern der Hofbesucher bildeten", and "dass sich Georgsgesellschaften auch in Elbing, Thorn, Brausberg und in der Altstadt Königsberg als erste Inhaber der Artushöfe finden".

³⁷ See the tabular breakdown: S. Selzer, *Artushöfe*, pp. 163–164, tab. 6.

³⁸ See: E. Keyser, *Die Baugeschichte*, p. 143; idem, *Der Artushof und der "Gemeine Kaufmann" in Danzig*, "Mitteilungen des Westpreußischen Geschichtsvereins", vol. 31, 1932, p. 38.

³⁹ See on this subject: D. Kattinger, *Die "Universitas" der Gotlandfahrer. Eine kaufmännische Genossenschaft in der Handelspolitik Lübecks und Visbys am Ende des 13. Jh.*, in: *Genossenschaftliche Strukturen in der Hanse*, pp. 41–63; F. Benninghoven, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–95.

Hanzeatic trade as early as in the 13th century, so before Prussian towns⁴⁰. Merchants from Prussian towns began to participate in the great Hanzeatic trade from the close of the 13th century, and this process was connected, among other factors, with the arrival in Prussia of a wave of settlers from Westfalen. Therefore, one can assume that the territorial provenance of the merchants arriving in the Teutonic state at the turn of the 13th century was relatively homogenous, that is why territorial guilds were not formed there, but only general guilds that associated *der gemeynen koufmann*, i.e. all the merchants who lived in a town and those arriving in it to stay for a certain period of time⁴¹. It is noteworthy that the oldest information about company houses appeared precisely at the beginning of the 14th century. The excerpt, informing us that in 1320 the Artus House in Elbing and its guild were granted their legal status, indicates that the House was the seat of a merchant guild (company)⁴². That particular way, in the 14th and 15th centuries, Prussian company houses were perceived in the community of hanzeatic merchants. In 1356 a Danzig merchant Hermann von Brilon informed in his letter to the Council of Danzig about the closure of the Artus House by the Elbing Council⁴³. In 1392 the Council of Stralsund sent to Gdańsk a letter which gave information about some allegations against the expelled mayor Bertram Wulflam, asking the council *sendet desse scrift uppe konyng Artus hof den olderluden, dat de dat gelesen werde vor deme menen kopmanne*⁴⁴. There are some extant letters addressed to *gemeinen Kaufmann* in the Danzig Artus House from the following years: 1416, c. 1440, and c. 1450⁴⁵. According to guild statutes, it was

⁴⁰ See R. Czaja, *Udział wielkich miast pruskich w handlu hanzeatyckim do połowy XVI w.* (*The Participation of Great Prussian Towns in the Hanzeatic Trade till the Second Half of the 14th Century*), parts 1-2, "Zapiski Historyczne", vol. 60, 1995, fasc. 2-3, 4, pp. 21-38, 43-55.

⁴¹ R. Hammel-Kiesow, *Die Hanse*, München 2000, p. 68; E. Keyser, *Der Artushof*, p. 43.

⁴² P. Himelreich, *Elbinger Chronik*, p. 12.

⁴³ *Preußisches Urkundenbuch*, ed. K. Conrad, Marburg 1969, vol. 5, p. 543.

⁴⁴ *Hanserecesse und andere Akten der Hansetage von 1256-1430*, ed. K. Kopmann, Leipzig 1880, vol. 4, pp. 39-40.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, Bd. 6, Leipzig 1889, p. 282; The State Archives in Gdańsk, cat. N° 300, D, 71/36, 59; S. Selzer, *Trinkstuben als Orte der Kommunikation. Das Beispiel der Artushöfe im Preußenland (ca. 1350-1550)*, in: *Geschlechtergesellschaften*, p. 85.

only merchants who could become guild members⁴⁶. The right to enter the House was also granted to merchants arriving in Danzig from other Hanzeatic towns. In 1441 this right was also extended to the Nuremberg merchants⁴⁷.

In the first half of the 14th century these were the town councils which gained a decisive influence on the management of houses which belonged to merchant guilds. Simultaneously, within an initially homogenous group of merchants, a process of social diversification started, and merchants linked to the management began to acquire a privileged (distinct) position in houses. This process was expressed in an excerpt from the statute, probably drawn up in the middle of the 14th century, of the company house in Kulm, according to which councillors and assessors (Ger. *Schöffe*) enjoyed an unrestricted access to the corporation seated in *Kompenhaus*. The Town Council had a decisive vote in admitting new members *wer aber von den Anderen darauf gehen will der soll durch die Alderleute dem Rate gegenüber darum werben*⁴⁸. This social diversification resulted in internal divisions amongst the members of the merchant guild. In 1421 the Danzig Artus House was divided into two houses: the "big" one and the "small" one. The former one was intended for assessors and councillors⁴⁹.

Elite St. George's Guilds were also a form of social separation of the ruling top from a wide group of merchants. Their establishing should be understood as a result of social diversification among an initially homogenous community (guild) of company houses. Yet, in the preface to the new statute of the Artus House in Thorn, which was written in 1615, we track down a different image of divisions among the community of merchants. St. George's Guild was — in the light of this account — to be founded concurrently with the Artus House, whose major proprietor it was. In 1385 the guild agreed to incorporate the guild of grain merchants into the House⁵⁰. The account was also to serve the justification of an exclusive position of St. George's Guild, and

⁴⁶ P. Simson, *Der Artushof*, p. 305; S. Selzer, *Trinkstuben*, pp. 80–81.

⁴⁷ *Acten der Ständetage Preußens unter der Herrschaft des Deutschen Ordens* (below referred to as: ASP), ed. M. Toepfen, vol. 2, Leipzig 1880, p. 346

⁴⁸ F. Schultz, *Die Stadt Kulm im Mittelalter*, "Zeitschrift des Westpreußischen Geschichtsvereins", vol. 23, 1888, p. 166.

⁴⁹ P. Simson, *Der Artushof*, p. 312–313; E. Keyser, *Die Baugeschichte*, p. 147.

⁵⁰ *Bericht über einige Verwaltungs=Angelegenheiten*, p. 43.

explain, from the 17th century perspective, the genesis of organizational diversification within the House, but it cannot be regarded as a fully credible source for its history. We do not possess any information that would confirm the existence in the 14th century of a grain merchants guild. Besides, the role in the economic activity of the town played by grain trade was not big enough to let a specific professional group be separated from the group of merchants as a whole⁵¹. There is no doubt, however, that the author of the above mentioned account made use of extant statutes and guild books, and therefore some passages of this source seem to be credible enough. Referring to the statute from 1447 the author passes on, among other things, the information that the guild was managed by six elders — two from among the mayors, two from the councillors, and the other two who represented the rest of the members⁵². It is characteristic, however, that it was Konrad Teudenkus and Hans vom Walde who were on the list as the elders representing the latter group. Konrad Teudenkus held of post of a councillor from 1436, and he died in 1471⁵³. Hans vom Walde was probably a knight from the Kulm Land⁵⁴. Thus, the persons who would represent non-councillors in the guild management stemmed from the families of councillor and noble descent. If we also consider the fact that the decisive role in admitting new members to the guild was played by the town council, we have the right to say that St. George's Guild in Thorn was a very exclusive organization, which grouped members of families of councillor and noble descent. Membership in the organization was denied to assessors.

St. George's Guild in Thorn also developed its own forms of religious devotion. Together with the whole Artus House it possessed in the parish church St. Nicholas' Chapel, which was determined in sources as *der kaufmanne capella us der Aldenstadt, der iuncheren und kuffmans capella* or *der iuncher capel-*

⁵¹ The person writing down the preface to the statute may have used the information about the Vistula Skippers Guild, which surely existed towards the end of the 14th century in Thorn and in other large Prussian towns, see: ASP, vol. 1, ed. M. Toeppen, Leipzig 1878, pp. 38–40.

⁵² *Bericht über einige Verwaltungs=Angelegenheiten*, p. 44.

⁵³ R. Czaja, *Urzednicy miejscy Torunia do roku 1454. Spisy (The Municipal Office Workers of Toruń till 1454, Registers)*, Part I: *Till 1454*, Toruń 1999, p. 224.

⁵⁴ ASP, vol. 3, ed. M. Toeppen, Leipzig 1882, pp. 67, 687. Another knight, Fryderyk Cegenberg von Buchwalde was mentioned as a member of the guild in 1390.

len⁵⁵. A particular importance of the merchants' chapel is noticeable in the fact that it was the only chapel in the parish church which was administered by a person designated by the town council⁵⁶. One can assume that the chaplain of merchants, i.e. a merchant corporation grouped in a company house, was at the same time the chaplain of St. George's Guild. This assumption is based on the fact that in 1449 the role of a guardian of the chaplain of Simon's merchants was played by one of the elders of the guild, Hans vom Walde⁵⁷. However, irrespective of the forms of devotion common for the whole House, the members of St. George's Guild also developed their own religious activity, in which the most significant was a commemorative service, which was held for the souls of the dead and living members⁵⁸. In 1447 the council issued a new statute which regulated the procedures of holding a commemorative liturgy: *Wie es mit ihrer Kühre, mit ihrer Administration, Collecten, Einkaufen, Begängnüssen zu halten*⁵⁹. There is also a reference to a guild book which contained the names of the dead and living members, which was used in liturgy. It has to be stressed that the commemoration practice developed regardless of devotional activity which encompassed the whole community of an Artus House. It is confirmed in the reference on separate books of St. George's and a guild book of the whole House: *vorhanden Matricula, Register und Rolle, darin die Nahmen der Brüderschafft, ihre Hauß-Fr. [auen] und Kinder enthalten; außershalb der, in gemeinem Brüder-Buche des Hoffes. Item Verzeichnis, wer in diese Brüderschafft anzunehmen*⁶⁰. There-

⁵⁵ *Księga ławnicza Nowego Miasta Torunia 1387–1450 (The Assessors Book of the New Town of Thorn, 1387–1450)*, Fontes TNT 63, ed. K. Ciesielska, Warszawa 1973, N° 1098, 1151, 1336, 1747–1749, 1835, 1970.

⁵⁶ K. Górski, M. Gołombiowski, *Wykaz prebend kościelnych w Toruniu z 1541 r. (The Register of Prebends in Thorn from 1541)*, "Zapiski Historyczne", vol. 42, 1977, p. 159.

⁵⁷ *Księga ławnicza Starego Miasta Torunia 1428–1456 (The Assessors Book of the Old Town of Toruń 1428–1456)*, Fontes TNT 75–76, parts 1–2, ed. K. Ciesielska, J. Tandecki, Toruń 1992–1993, N° 1470.

⁵⁸ On the role of memory in creating group identity see: O. G. Oexle, *Liturgisches Memoria und historische Erinnerung. Zur Frage nach dem Gruppenbewusstsein und dem Wissen der eigenen Geschichte in den mittelalterlichen Gilden*, in: *Tradition als historische Kraft*, ed. N. Kamp, J. Wollasch, Berlin–New York 1982, pp. 323–340; D. Poock, *Rat und Memoria*, in: *Memoria in der Gesellschaft des Mittelalters*, ed. D. Geuenich, O. G. Oexle, Göttingen 1994, pp. 286–335.

⁵⁹ *Bericht über einige Verwaltungs-Angelegenheiten*, p. 44.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 44.

fore, there is no doubt that towards the close of the 14th century at the latest, a narrower managing group in the Old Town of Thorn stood apart from the class of merchants, which expressed its distinction through, among other things, the exclusive St. George's Guild, whose social exclusiveness on the territory of a company house was reflected in its privileged organizational position and separate commemorative devotion. A social extent of St. George's Guild largely corresponded with the circle of the families of councillors, who directly influenced decision-making.

St. George's Guild of the Artus House in the Major Town of Danzig is originally mentioned in sources from 1403 as the owner of a chapel in St. Mary's Church⁶¹. On the basis of the names of the elders listed in the statute of the guild dated from c. 1410, one can suppose that among its members were both councillors and assessors. From among 13 people, 4 held office of councillors in 1410, 3 people were assessors, 5 — became councillors or assessors after 1410, and one person did not hold any office at all⁶². Thus, the Gdańsk guild did not have as much exclusive character as the Toruń guild. Yet, it was also the members of St. George's Guild in Danzig who organized their own commemorative liturgy. In the statute of 1410 a book is mentioned where names of the members and their families were listed, and the duty to participate in funerals of fellow members was marked⁶³. Theodor Hirsch claimed that in the Major Town of Danzig was also active a patrician St. Martin's Guild, which was founded by the councillors the same time they opened the council chapel in the Town Hall in 1427⁶⁴. This argument, however, cannot be supported by any evidence.

Due to lack of evidence one cannot answer the question what role St. George's Guild in Elbing played in the process of separ-

⁶¹ P. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig*, vol. 1, Danzig 1913, p. 77.

⁶² The statute of the guild published in: *Scriptores rerum Prussicarum*, ed. T. Hirsch, E. Strehlke, M. Toeppen, Bd. 4, Leipzig 1874, pp. 350–351: *her Petir Vorrath, her Steffen Ploczker, her hermen Clenemeister, her Clausz Rogge, her Johan von Kanten, her Wilhelm von Ummen, her Herman Rogge, her Gerd von der Becke, Albert Dodorp, Johan Wiedeman, Petir von Ummen, Meinecke vom Steine, Hinrich Vorrath*.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 351; S. Selzer, *Artushöfe*, p. 115.

⁶⁴ Th. Hirsch, *Die Ober=Pfarrkirche von St. Marien in Danzig*, Danzig 1843, p. 156; a critical review of this argument see: R. Czaja, *Korporative Formen der Religiosität des Patriziats in den preußischen Großstädten*, "Quaestiones medii aevi novae", vol. 2, 1997, p. 109.

ation of the patriciate from the class of merchants. St. George's Chapel is originally mentioned in a will from 1478, yet there is no certainty whether it really belonged to St. George's Guild⁶⁵. In addition to St. George's Guild, St. Olaf's Guild, which was mentioned in 1388 and possessed its own chapel in St. Nicholas's parish church⁶⁶, was also linked to the Elbing Artus House. We do not know, however, what was the social extent of this corporation. During the 15th century, St. John's Guild, established by brewers, gained its socially exclusive character. According to the statute issued in 1428, the membership in this guild was granted to brewers, merchants, and councillors only⁶⁷. However, in the first half of the 15th century only single councillors belonged to this guild. The situation changed only in the second half of the 15th century when, following social and economic transformations, the Elbing ruling group began to increasingly participate in the production of beer, and had a bigger share in St. John's Guild. In 1479, 24 people of councillors' families belonged to the guild, whereas in 1426 only 3 councillors were its members⁶⁸. Also, a large number of brewers and merchants (56 people in 1479) belonged to St. John's Guild, thus it could not play a role of a socially exclusive corporation through which the ruling group (patriciate) would express its social distinction.

In the extant sources we do not find any information about the process of a social diversification of the merchant guild of the company house in Kulm. We can only assume that after the Kulm merchants ceased to participate in long-range trade, which happened over the 14th century, it was hucksters who became the

⁶⁵ E. Volkman n, *Die Originallurkunden des Elbinger Stadtarchivs*, Elbing 1875, N° 150a, p. 23: *czu dem newen angehobenen ... altar yn unser pharre kirche, senthe Jorgens altar genanth*.

⁶⁶ The State Archives in Gdańsk, cat. N° 369,1/114, p. 7; M. Perlbach, *St. Olavsgilden in Preußen*, "Hansische Geschichtsblätter", vol. 10, 1901, p. 172; M. Toeppen, *Elbinger Antiquitäten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des städtischen Lebens im Mittelalter*, Marienwerder 1870–1972, p. 117.

⁶⁷ The State Archives in Gdańsk, cat. N° 369, 1/3363, p. 7, 11v, ref. 34; Z. Kropidłowski, *Statut elbląskiego bractwa tragarzy piwa ważnym świadectwem rozwoju ruchu brackiego (The Statute of the Elbing Guild of Beer Porters as Important Evidence for the Development of the Guild Movement)*, in: *W kręgu badań profesora Stanistawa Gierszewskiego*, Gdańsk 1995, p. 86.

⁶⁸ The source, based on the register of members of the guild which was founded in 1419, in the extant copy by the Elbląg archivist, E. Neumann, *The State Archives in Gdańsk*, cat. N° 492/812, pp. 125–134; see: R. Czaja, *Socjotopografia miasta Elbląga w średniowieczu (The Sociotopography of the Town of Elbing in the Middle Ages)*, Toruń 1992, pp. 46–47.

professional group which prevailed in the company house⁶⁹. The existence of St. George's Guild in Braunsberg was not confirmed in sources until the 16th century. In the records of the bishop's inspection of 1565 an entry was made on *fraternitas curialium et nautarum*, which in the German version of the inspection records was defined as *Brüder S. Georgii des König-Artushoffes*⁷⁰. In 1583 St. George's Guild was granted a new statute where there was a reference to the former Corpus Christi Guild which grouped members of a shooting guild⁷¹, and skippers⁷². One can therefore assume that St. George's Guild was founded in Braunsberg not before the 16th century, to replace the former skippers' guild which was identical with the guild of an Artus House. During the 14th century the merchants of Braunsberg withdrew from long-range trade, and the ruling group recruited themselves mainly from among skippers.

The ruling elites of the Old Town of Königsberg and Knipau, similarly to the ones in Thorn and Danzig, created exclusive guilds which were connected with Artus Houses⁷³. In Knipau there was elite St. Olaf's Guild, which also developed commemorative liturgy for the dead and living members⁷⁴. However, it is not easy to answer the question whether it can be regarded as an elite corporation of a ruling group which aimed to stress its distinction from the group of merchants. In 1477 there is a men-

⁶⁹ F. Schultz, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 169, there is no evidence, however, to confirm the theory that St. George's Guild existed also in Kulm; Z. H. Nowak, *Dzieje Chełmna do końca 18 w. (The History of Kulm till the End of the 18th century)*, in: *Dzieje Chełmna. Zarys monograficzny*, ed. M. Biskup, Toruń 1987, p. 75.

⁷⁰ F. Hipler, *op. cit.*, p. 613.

⁷¹ In the Middle Ages there were two shooting gardens in Braunsberg. The garden at the Mnisia Gate was under the jurisdiction of the town council, and associated the upper group, whereas the garden at the Wysoka Gate was accessible to all townsmen, see: *Codex Diplomaticus Warmiensis*, ed. C. P. Woelky, J. M. Saage, vol. 3, Mainz 1872, pp. 237, 239.

⁷² F. Hipler, *op. cit.*, p. 614.

⁷³ D. Heckmann, *Das Fragment eines Buches der Königsberger Olafsgilde von 1477 bis 1503*, "Zeitschrift für Ostforschung", vol. 43, 1994, pp. 351-367; *idem*, *Die ältesten Satzungen des Junkerhofes und -gartens der Altstadt Königsberg aus dem Jahre 1431*, "Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung", vol. 44, 1995, pp. 358-374.

⁷⁴ The conclusion is justified by the reference written in the Guild Book of the assessors in the Old Town of Königsberg, who borrow liturgical utensils from St. Olaf's Guild, see: *Quellenbeiträge zur Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg im Mittelalter*, ed. M. Perlbach, Göttingen 1878, p. 112; W. Franz, *Die geistlichen Bruderschaften Königsbergs im Mittelalter*, "Prussia", vol. 34, 1940, p. 167.

tion in written sources of *rathsgilde*, i.e. the guild which grouped members of the families of councillors, yet we do not know whether it was identical with St. Olaf's Guild⁷⁵. The following record in the statute of "Junkergarten" *das nymand van unsirn burgern in desin garthen czu lage geen sal, her habe denne czuwor sente Ulaffs gilde gewonnen, awsgenomen dy geste* indicates that a social scope of the guild was beyond the circle of families of councillors⁷⁶. This assumption is supported by the analysis of excerpts from the guild's record book between 1477 and 1503, where the persons were not councillors appeared as its members⁷⁷. Thus, it seems that in Knipau, in addition to St. Olaf's Guild, which had a wider social scope, there was another, elite council guild. Not much is known about the internal regulations of the Artus House (a.k.a. *Junkerhoff*) in the Old Town of Thorn. The preambles to the statute of the house and garden of Junkers *Dis seint die gesetze des kauffmahns und der compagnye, die in den hoff adir in den garten gehen* indicate that no elite guild, which would group the ruling board, stood apart from the community of the house⁷⁸.

To sum up the remarks concerning guild aspects in the organization of patriciate in Prussian towns one has to admit that, contrary to popular scholarly belief, we cannot confirm the existence of a homogenous model of a socially exclusive corporation. In all large Prussian towns, in the first half of the 14th century merchant guilds were founded, whose seats (houses) were determined as Artus Houses or company houses. Over the 14th century, the control over guilds and their houses was taken over by town councils. Corporations associated with Artus Houses cannot be regarded as the institutions which were to demonstrate social exclusiveness of a higher class. The tradition of chivalric forms of behaviour, common feasts, and commemorative liturgy both involved the whole courtly community and were characteristic of the whole merchant class. Only in Danzig, Thorn, and probably in Knipau and Elbing, was the process of a social diversification of the merchant class reflected in the creation of separate, elite guilds. Yet, it has to be emphasised that

⁷⁵ *Quellen-Beiträge*, p. 135.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 38.

⁷⁷ D. Heckmann, *Fragment*, pp. 359-360.

⁷⁸ D. Heckmann, *Die ältesten Satzungen*, p. 366.

their exclusiveness varied. In Thorn, St. George's Guild grouped only the ruling elite (families of councillors), whereas both councillors and assessors belonged to the guild in Danzig.

The problem of corporations in medieval Livonian towns has been widely discussed in historiography⁷⁹. Already, in the initial phase of colonization by Lower-German merchants along the Lower Dvina, first information about merchant guilds appeared. In 1211 the Bishop of Riga forbade to establish a general guild (*gilda communis*) in his diocese⁸⁰, which would associate all merchants arriving in Riga irrespective of their place of origin. This is why only territorial guilds functioned in the town on the Dvina in the 13th century. In sources there are references to the associations of merchants from Munster, Soest, Lubeck and Dortmund⁸¹. Initially, they were founded by travelling merchants (*frequentes*), who were only staying in Riga temporarily, but, following transformations in the organization of trade, which took place over the 13th century, they gradually became corporations that associated those merchants who chose Riga as their permanent residence. In addition to merchants, among their members were representatives of other professions, skippers, craftsmen, porters, and even clergymen⁸². Similar practice also took place in Reval, where in the 13th century there were two merchant corporations. St. Olaf's Guild was founded by merchants from Gotland who were staying over the winter in Estonia, but after a time, it involved also merchants who lived in Rewel permanently. St. Canute's guild, which was probably established between 1238–1241, originally grouped merchants from Denmark and Germany⁸³. In the second half of the 13th century, together with an increasing influx of settlers, a process began when both corporations were being transformed from merchant associations into organizations which also associated craftsmen. In the middle of the 14th century a tendency in large Livonian towns was

⁷⁹ On the historiography of the subject see: H. von zur Mühlen, *op. cit.*, *passim*; Th. Brück, *Zwischen ständischer Repräsentanz*, pp. 239–271

⁸⁰ *Liv-, Est- und Kurländisches Urkundenbuch* (below referred to as: *LEKUB*), ed. F. G. von Bunge, vol. 1, Reval 1854, N° 20.

⁸¹ F. Benninghoven, *op. cit.*, p. 94; C. Redlich, *Das älteste Riga und die Stuben zu Münster und Soest*, "Zeitschrift für Ostforschung", 1988, p. 555.

⁸² H. von zur Mühlen, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁸³ P. Johansen, H. von zur Mühlen, *Deutsch und undeutsch im mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Reval*, Köln-Wien 1973, p. 22.

increasingly noticeable for merchants to establish separate corporations. On the one hand, they were to represent merchants who ran Hanzeatic long-range trade, and to protect their rights, on the other hand, they stressed a group identity of merchants as well as their social exclusiveness as opposed to other townsmen. Heinz von Mühlen claimed that estate and ethnic factors played a dominant role in transformations in the organization of guilds, which took place over the 14th century. According to this scholar, in Livonian towns three kinds of guilds came into being in the middle of the 14th century: those associating the merchant ruling class, German craftsmen, and the local community. Corporations facilitated the strengthening of social relations and became an element in an internal structure of town communes⁸⁴. In the light of recent research on the character of medieval guilds, this concept, however, seems to be doubtful⁸⁵. Guilds were organizations which were primarily founded at grass roots level in order to fulfil religious, professional, and social requirements of their members. It was probably in 1348 when in Reval a merchant guild was established (the first reference in written sources dates back to 1363), originally known as *Kindergilde*, and from the end of the 15th century — *Große Gilde*⁸⁶. As a result of this process, former St. Canute's and St. Olaf's Guilds became corporations of craftsmen, while St. Canute's Guild grouped mainly German craftsmen, and St. Olaf's Guild — Estonian craftsmen. In Riga, both merchants living in town and those staying there temporarily, founded a merchant guild (*Kompanie der Kaufleute*), which was first mentioned in 1354, and in 1399 known as the Great Guild (*Große Gilde*). The corporation of merchants took over the house of the former guild of merchants from Munster⁸⁷. The right to joining the new merchant guild was refused to craftsmen, clergymen, and non-German people⁸⁸. At the turn of the 14th

⁸⁴ H. von zur Mühlen, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁸⁵ O. G. Oexle, *Die mittelalterlichen Gilden: Ihre Selbstdeutung und ihr Beitrag zur Formung sozialer Strukturen*, in: "Miscellanea mediaevalia" 12, 1, New York 1979, pp. 203–226; *idem*, *Die mittelalterliche Zunft als Forschungsproblem. Ein Beitrag zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte der Moderne*, "Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte", vol. 118, 1982, pp. 1–44.

⁸⁶ E. Nottbeck, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁸⁷ F. Benninghoven, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

⁸⁸ *Schragen der Gilden und Ämter der Stadt Riga*, ed. W. Stieda, C. Mettig, Riga 1896, p. 337.

century, merchant corporations from Riga, Reval, Dorpat, and Pernau gave birth to the so called Black-Heads Guilds (*Kompanie der Schwarzenhäupter*), which associated single and professionally dependent local merchants and foreign merchants⁸⁹. Merchant corporations in Riga and Reval, as opposed to Prussian towns, regained much greater autonomy from town councils. The Great Guild in Riga even had a certain share in the decision-making in town, and ran its own independent foreign policy⁹⁰. One can assume that the process of social diversification took place also within the Livonian merchant guilds. Yet, the Black-Heads Guild was not founded as a result of this process, as it did not become an exclusive association of merchants until modern times⁹¹. The fact that the majority of older guilds originated from the families which were represented in the council, can be interpreted as a sign of social distinction of the ruling group⁹². A similar process can be observed in the book of the Shooting Guild, started in 1416 by both the Blackheads, the Great Guild and the town council, where the members from among the council were listed separately⁹³. Another example of social distinction of the ruling group was also the establishing of the older and younger jury in the Great Guild in Rewel, which were first mentioned in 1529⁹⁴. Therefore, one has the right to conclude that in the Livonian towns of the 15th century starts a process of social diversification of the merchant class, yet it did not result in the formation of separate, exclusive patrician guilds.

⁸⁹ Th. Brück, *Zu den Beziehungen der Korporationen der Schwarzhäupter in den Städten Riga, Reval und Dorpat in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Reval: Handel und Wandel vom 13. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. N. Angermann, W. Lenz, Lüneburg 1997, pp. 183–198; idem, *Bemerkungen zur Kaufmannschaft Rigas in der ersten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Schwarzhäupter zwischen 1413 und 1424*, in: *"kopet uns werk by tyden". Beiträge zur hansischen und preußischen Geschichte*, ed. N. Jörn, D. Kattinger, H. Wernicke, Schwerin 1999, pp. 113–130.

⁹⁰ T. Brück, *Zwischen ständischer Repräsentanz*, p. 241.

⁹¹ F. Amelung, G. Wrangell, *Geschichte der revaler Schwarzenhäupter*, Reval 1930; A. Redlich, *Sitte und Brauch des livländischen Kaufmanns*, Riga 1935, p. 13.

⁹² The list of older merchant guilds in Reval, see: E. von Nottbeck, *op. cit.*, pp. 117–119.

⁹³ C. Mettig, *Das Schützengildenbuch der Schwarzenhäupter*, "Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft für Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Ostseeprovinzen Russlands", Riga 1885, pp. 105–108.

⁹⁴ E. von Nottbeck, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

In this closing paragraph one should stress that, contrary to common belief, the practice of creating corporative forms of organization by ruling groups in the Baltic towns was rather marginal. Admittedly, in Lubeck, a process of separation through creating different guilds of merchants from among a wide merchant class was noticeable, nevertheless, the fact that the Zirkel Guild received the status of an exclusive guild was derivative. It was only in Prussian towns where exclusive corporations — St. George's Guilds were formed within the guild system, yet, even they varied in their level of social exclusiveness. In Livonian towns, the practice of social diversification of the merchant class was indeed observable, but it did not lead to the establishing of exclusive patrician guilds.

(Translated by Robert Bubczyk)