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Milites amphibii. The Baltic Port Cities' Military Role for Sweden as a Great Power, 1561–1815

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Since prehistoric times, Sweden has been a country determined by its central position in the Baltic Sea. Particularly before the emergence of railways, water was an indispensable precondition for transport of large amounts of goods, people, and news. This is obvious even for the earliest historical times as evidenced by trading places such as Birka and Sigtuna or the port towns of medieval Sweden as for example Stockholm, Kalmar, Åbo, Raumo, Ulvsby (Björneborg), Borgå, Viborg or Visby.[1] In the early modern period, when Sweden, after having been a member of the Union of Kalmar since 1397, returned to sovereignty in 1523, one of Gustav Vasa's foremost political goals was to develop trade and a transportation network in the Baltic Sea area. It was Sweden's aim to generate trade profits – which in turn were a precondition to compete, economically and politically, with Sweden's hereditary enemy, the kingdom of Denmark and Norway, but also with the still powerful Hansa League. In order to achieve this goal, naval dominance in the Baltic Sea region was of the essence. From the middle of the 16th century, Swedish kings therefore made great efforts to develop a major merchant fleet as well as a naval force in order to protect Swedish maritime trade, but also in order to gain bridgeheads on the other side of the Baltic Sea.[2]

1 Lars Ersgård, "Medieval and Early Modern Towns in Sweden in a long-term perspective," in: *Urban Variation – Utopia, Planning and Practice*, eds. Per Cornell, Lars Ersgård, and Andrine Nilsen (Gothenburg: Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg, 2018), 73–95.

2 Axel Zettersten, *Svenska flottans historia: åren 1522–1634* (Stockholm: Jos. Seligmanns, 1890); Otto Lybeck, *Svenska flottans historia. Örlogsflottan i ord och bild från dess grundläggning under*

From 1561 to 1721, Sweden in rapid succession conquered a rash of towns and cities on the southern coastline of the Baltic Sea, the majority of which were members of the Hanseatic League. Some towns and cities, however, were put under military protection only. Sweden sent armed forces to Reval[3] in 1561, to Reval and Pernau in 1581, to Narva in 1581, to Riga in 1621, to Frauenburg, Tolkemit, Braunsberg, Elbing, Fischhausen, Pillau, and Marienburg in 1626, to Lochstädt in 1627, to Stralsund in 1628, to Memel in 1629, to Stettin in 1630, to Greifswald and Kolberg in 1631, and to Wismar in 1632.[4] In Danzig, Sweden had, according to the truce of Altmark (1629), the right to collect duties related to trading transactions, from 1629 to 1635. From 1626 to 1635, Sweden blocked Danzig and conquered the fortress of Danziger Haupt, but not the city as such. Danzig was even pillaged by Sweden in 1703 during the Great Northern War (1700–1721),[5] but nevertheless remained the only larger harbour city outside mainland Sweden and Denmark that the Swedish troops failed to conquer and occupy for a longer period of time.[6] Even generally speaking, all these conquests, occupations, protective measures and exploitation rights were not necessarily long-lasting. Some of the towns and cities mentioned were under Swedish rule for only a handful of years, whereas others belonged to Sweden's crown for centuries. Subsequently, Swedish troops and naval vessels came and left, conquered and reconquered some of them during various periods of time.

Ruling over these towns and cities, most of which were in possession of a port, served a twofold purpose: to gain strategic bridgeheads on the continent and to use the trade of the mostly flourishing and wealthy urban communities to replenish the always hard-pressed royal treasury. In other terms: what Swedish politicians of the time aimed at was warfare, mercantilism, and territorial expansion. No one in the Swedish government realised this correlation better than Sweden's chancellor Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1645), when he stressed the political strategy, that Sweden should gain control

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Gustav Vasa fram till våra dagar, vol 1: 1521–1679 (Malmö: Allhem, 1942); Jan Glete: "Svenska örlogsfartyg 1521–1560: flottans uppbyggnad under ett tekniskt brytningsskede," in: *Forum navale* 31 (1977), 23–119; Lars Ericson Wolke and Anna Sara Hammar, *Sjömakt och sjöfolk: den svenska flottan under 500 år* (Forum navales skriftserie 82) (Stockholm: Nordic Academic Press, 2022), 34–88.

3 Town names are given in contemporary Swedish and German denomination.

4 Claes Annerstedt, *Grundläggningen af svenska väldet i Livland 1558–1563 samt deraf alstrade strider inom Vasahuset* (Uppsala: Edquist and Berglund, 1868), 40–41; Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars – War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe, 1558–1721* (London and New York: Longman Publishings, 2000), 23–43, 102–181; Lars Ericson, et.al., *Svenska slagfält* (Stockholm: Wahlström and Widstrand, 2003), 77–82, 111–118; Ulf Sundberg, *Svenska krig 1521–1814* (Stockholm: Hjalmarson & Högberg Bokförlag, 1998), 42–187; Ulf Sundberg, *Svenska freder och stillestånd 1249–1814* (Stockholm: Hjalmarson & Högberg Bokförlag, 2002), 203–238; Ferdinand Gottschalk: "Der Schwedisch–Polnische Krieg in Preußen von 1626–1629," *Preußische Provinzial-Blätter* 26 (1841), 129–184; Leszek Podhorodecki, *Rapier i koncerz: z dziejów wojen polsko-szwedzkich* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1985).

5 For all Swedish wars mentioned in this contribution see: Sundberg, *Svenska krig*.

6 Sundberg, *Svenska freder och stillestånd*, 303–304; Hannes Saarinnen, *Bürgerstadt und absoluter Kriegsherr: Danzig und Karl XII. im Nordischen Krieg* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinin Seura, 1996).

over as many cities as possible, and even to build up some itself, in order to develop from a country somewhere in the remote backyard of Europe to a kingdom respected by the mightiest powers of the continent. In order to do so, he tried to concentrate all international trade in Stockholm and some of the former Hansa towns. This in turn predetermined sea routes across the Baltic Sea, which more or less all started or ended in Stockholm – for trade vessels as well as for navy ships.[7]

Sweden's amphibious warfare

An important ingredient to protect Swedish or at least Swedish-controlled trade over the Baltic Sea and to wage war in countries on the Southern coastline was to perfect a military strategy, which military experts normally call *amphibious warfare*. In a Swedish historiographical context, the term amphibious warfare goes back to works published by Swedish maritime historian Jan Glete (1947–2009)[8] and describes the strategy Sweden's military used in order to ship troops across the Baltic Sea and to safeguard the supply of Swedish troops on the continent with food, equipment, and replacements. Moreover, amphibious warfare is, at least in a Swedish context, closely connected to early modern Swedish state building, including building-up a fiscal-military system, that enabled Sweden to rapidly expand beyond its original territorial borders.[9] In terms of logistics, amphibious warfare in general belongs to the most complex military operations. It might in many cases be synonymous to a simple landing operation. In other cases, the

7 See: Oxenstierna's town regulations of 1628. *[Axel Oxenstiernas] Swerikes rikes stadz lagh, effter den stormechtige, (...) herr Gustaf Adolphs, (...) befalning, vthgångin aff trycket*, ed. Johannes Bureus, (Stockholm: Ignatius Meurer, 1628); Cfr. Eli F. Heckscher, "Den ekonomiska innebörden av 1500– och 1600–talens svenska stadsgrundningar," *Historisk tidskrift (S)* 43 (1923): 309–350; Birgitta Ericsson, "De anlagda städerna i Sverige ca. 1580–1800," in: *Urbaniseringsprosessen i Norden 2. De anlagte steder på 1600–1700 tallet*, ed. Grete Authén Blom, (Oslo-Bergen Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 103–109; Sven-Erik Åström, "Anlagda städer och centralortssystem i Finland 1550–1785," in: *Urbaniseringsprosessen i Norden 2. De anlagte steder på 1600–1700 tallet*, ed. Grete Authén Blom (Oslo-Bergen Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 135–157, 160; Nils Ahlberg, *Stadsgrundningar och planförändringar. Svensk stadsplanering 1521–1721* (Uppsala: Uppsalas universitet, 2005), 67–89; Lars Nilsson, "Staden och det militära. Garnisoner och urbanisering i svensk historia," in: *Nordens garnisonsstäder. Slutrapport från ett forskningsprojekt*, ed. Gunnar Artéus (Stockholm: Probus, 1997), 146–156, especially 147, 153.

8 Jan Glete, "Amphibious Warfare in the Baltic, 1550–1700," in: *Amphibious Warfare 1000–1700: Commerce, State Formation and European Expansion*, eds. David J. B. Trim, and Mark Charles Fissel (Leiden et.al.: Brill, 2006), 123–148. On the concept of amphibious warfare see: D.J.B. Trim and Mark Charles Fissel, "Amphibious Warfare, 1000 – 1700: Concepts and Contexts," in: *Amphibious warfare 1000–1700*, 1–50.

9 Jan Glete, *Navies and Nations: Warships, Navies and State building in Europe and America, 1500–1860*. 2 volumes (Stockholm: Almquist and Wiksell, 1993); Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500–1600* (London: Routledge, 2002).

concept points at a combined water-land-operation without any landing operation at all.[10] Sometimes, hit-and-run tactics are involved, sometimes an assault and the conquest of territories might be aimed at. Amphibious operations can be pretended, or war vessels can serve as platforms of retreat for land operations. Even evacuations or relief measures in the case of dangerous situations can be part of amphibious warfare. But whatever the operational form, bigger port cities played a central role: as muster points, supply bases, relays for military operations, fortified protection against enemies, or centres of communication. All these aspects would, of course, be worth a thorough historical analysis and extensive description, because the topic has, for the early modern Swedish case, never been studied in detail. Due to my limited space in this contribution, however, I would like to restrict myself to two central aspects, i.e. the transfer of soldiers and military equipment from Swedish port cities to port cities on the Southern coast of the Baltic Sea, and the port cities' role within the context of amphibious warfare.

Transfer of troops and military equipment

An indispensable precondition for the transfer of troops and equipment as well as for the communication of major military units like a naval fleet was the creation of a central point of embarkment. During the first years of the early modern Swedish monarchy, the Swedish naval base was situated right next to the royal castle *Tre Kronor* in Stockholm. From here, ships could sail across the Stockholm archipelago and straight to the port towns on the southern Baltic coast. In the 1550s, this naval base was transferred to the island of Blasieholmen, in those days known as Skeppsholmen ("island of ships") or simply Holmen, today a part of central Stockholm.[11] In 1634, the point of embarkment was once again transferred, now to the island of today's Skeppsholmen, opposite to the Royal castle.[12] Another point of embarkment was a natural harbour in Stockholm's southern archipelago by the name of Älvsnabben, which was used as an anchorage ground for the Swedish navy since the reign of Erik XIV (ruled 1560–1568). It was this place, where Gustav II Adolf (ruled 1611–1632) in 1630 embarked with his invasion army

10 Merrill L. Bartlett, *Assault from the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1993).

11 Fredrik Ulrik Wrangel, *Stockholmiana I–IV. Anteckningar* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1912), 43–55.

12 In Denmark the situation was similar. The sole Danish naval base was *Holmen* in Copenhagen. From 1690, this point of embarkment was transferred to Nyholmen. Hans Christian Bjerg, *Holmen: Flådens base gennem 300 år* (København: Søværnets Materielkommando, 1990), 7; Cfr. Hans Christian Bjerg and John Erichsen, *Danske orlogsskibe 1690–1860: konstruktion og decoration* (København: Lademan, 1980).

to intervene in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) in Germany.[13] In 1679, a new point of embarkment was created with the ice-free harbour of Karlskrona in the southern Swedish region of Blekinge, which only recently (1658) had been conquered by Sweden and was located more centrally in and nearer to the opposite coastline of the Baltic Sea.[14] This north to south oriented distribution of naval bases also shows that Sweden's operational outlook during the 17th century still was more or less restricted to the Baltic Sea region. An additional naval base was created in western Sweden only in the last phase of Sweden's great power period,[15] during the Great Northern War: The "Old Wharf" (*Gamla varvet*) in the port of Göteborg, which was intended to serve Swedish warships operating in Danish and Norwegian waters of the North Sea.[16]

Just as important as the point of embarkment was the point of debarkation. This debarkation point ought to be concentrated, for reasons of effective communication and logistics, to only one single strip of land, preferably to a coast town with a good harbour. Sweden was, however, rarely in the position to build harbours for navy purposes on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea by its own means. Instead, the Swedish navy had to rely on port cities already existing or, in some cases, on spots apt for a landing on sandy shores without any harbour at all. This often was the case, when the Swedish government was not sure if the port cities in question could be trusted – as, for example, during the Thirty Years' War, the Great Northern War or Napoleon's War in Pomerania (1806–1807). In this case, Swedish troops normally were debarked on the shores of the islands of Usedom, Rügen, the spits of the lagoons of the Prussian and Lithuanian coast (Vistula and Curonian Lagoon), or in the Gulf of Riga.

What Sweden also could do, was to improve or to extend already existing harbours in those cities it was in control of. Thus, Erik XIV ordered, in the late 1560s, the recently gained, but poorly fortified Livonian port cities of Reval and Pernau to reinforce and to improve their harbours and fortifications, as he did for many other places in mainland

13 Ankarberg, Carl-Henrik, "Älvsnabben: kapartillhåll och flottbas i Stockholms skärgård," in: *Kung Valdemars segelled*, ed. Gerhard Flink (Stockholm: Streiffert, in cooperation with Riksantikvarieämbetet, 1995), 103–111.

14 Jarl Bromé, *Karlskrona stads historia. Del 1: 1680–1790* (Karlskrona: Karlskronas stad, 1930).

15 There is no standard meaning of the term "great power period" in research about Sweden's history. Some researchers take as a *terminus post quem* the beginning of Sweden's territorial expansion during the Livonian War (1558–1583), some the start of the reign of Gustav II Adolf (ruled 1611–1632); for some a "great power period" only starts after the peace treaty of Westphalia (1648), when Sweden achieved the status of a European power safeguarding the European power system in the second half of the 17th century. There is, however, a comparably large consensus about the *terminus ante quem* of Sweden's "great power period," which usually is defined by the Great Northern War (1700–1721). In this article, "great power period" means a period lasting from the Livonian War to the Great Northern War.

16 Ernst Bergman, *Gamla varvet vid Göteborg 1660–1825: historik och beskrivning* (Göteborg: Nautic, 1954); Gustaf Clemensson, *Gamla varvet i Lars och Ingela Gathenhielms besittning* (Göteborg: Elanders Boktryckeri Aktiebolag), 1938; Jan Lagerlund, *Skeppsgårdar och varv under svenska flottans äldre tid 1522–1680* (Kristianstad: Högskolan, [no date]).

Sweden (incl. Finland).[17] To build a separate harbour for naval vessels, however, was not implied in these measures. First in the 18th century, after the end of Sweden's status as a European great power and the loss of territories to neighbouring states, harbours were built in order to replace harbours in the lost territories. One of the best-known examples in this respect was the Finnish fortress and naval base of Fredrikshamn, created due to the loss of the harbour and fortress of Viborg, which had been ceded to Russia in the peace treaty of Nystad (30 August 1721). The already existing harbour of Vehkalahti was extended and rebuilt to fit military purposes. The small town of Vehkalahti was upgraded and renamed as Fredrikshamn in order to point to the fact that it now was a city and served the Swedish Empire's security interests and their supreme representative, king Frederik I. (ruled 1720–1751). At the same time however, Fredrikshamn turned into a military target, which during the Swedish – Russian War (1741–1743), was among the first victims of military operations and eventually got lost to Russia by the peace treaty of Åbo (7 August 1743).

Improvement and good treatment of port cities also was the order of the day, when it came to questions of supply and housing. Those port cities, which served as points of debarkation, could afford to answer to debarkation demands only, when Sweden did not press them too hard – which at the same time was a recipe for successful and lucrative commerce and profits, and for growing tax incomes to the Swedish crown. At the same time, harbour cities outside Sweden's centralised naval ports apparently never served as places of ship building for the Swedish navy. It was a common habit, however, that they were used to repair and to supply Swedish ships anchoring there with provisions and equipment. It cannot be proved here by documents, but the reason for this phenomenon seems to be that the Swedish government sought to avoid the spreading of knowledge about Swedish ship building beyond the borders of mainland Sweden. This danger was clearly given in harbour cities, where not only Swedish, but even merchants, agents and politically sensitive persons from all over Europe were present.

At the same time, Sweden profited from the fact that ships from many European states sailed through Baltic waters, some of which were taken by privateering activity or in the context of wars. Swedish ship building experts were especially interested in taking ships built in the Dutch ship building technique, because these ships were considered to be the most advanced ones – and it was Dutch merchants who possessed the biggest share of transport capacity, and suitable ships, in the Baltic Sea region during the 16th and 17th centuries.

17 Claes-Göran Isacson, *Vägen till stormakt: Vasaättens krig* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2006), 108.

Forms of amphibious warfare

In order to go into forms and functions of Swedish amphibious warfare, I would like to give some examples concerning the role of Baltic port cities in this regard. The following analysis could in general be based on original sources and historical accounts, especially diaries, memoirs, individual relations, protocols and regiment histories. Some of them are published, others can only be found in the Imperial and War Archives (*Riksarkivet*, *Krigsarkivet*) in Stockholm. The most indispensable Vademecum, though, was Julius Mankell's "Notes concerning the history of Swedish regiments" (*Anteckningar rörande svenska regementers historia*), published in 1866. Based on an analysis of Mankell's notes, four main forms of amphibious warfare, referring to different degrees of the army's and navy's mobility or stability respectively, can be distinguished:

1. The hit-and-run pattern
2. Amphibious operations with a temporary deployment of troops in the vicinity of cities
3. Amphibious operations ending up in the establishment of Swedish garrisons
4. Amphibious operations using coastal cities as centres for the distribution of troops

(1) The hit-and-run pattern

The hit-and-run pattern was not the usual approach of Swedish military operations, but has occasionally been used by Sweden's commanders, e.g. for the relief of Stralsund in 1628 or Narva in 1700. Troops were embarked in Stockholm, Älvsnabben, or later in Karlskrona, then were shipped to their operational area, where they executed their duties and returned to Sweden (or Finland). The operation period was meant to be as short as possible, because there was no such thing as a Swedish standing army before 1680 (at least not in the modern sense) and campaigns and sieges were among the, if not the, Empire's most expensive cost factors. This period in the history of the Swedish recruiting and financing system has been coined by historians as the period of the "older canton system" (*äldre indelningsverket*). Returning from a military operation meant for the soldiers to return to their villages and farms, before another call came for a new operation. We can observe this pattern already in the earliest days of the early modern Swedish monarchy, when during the Great Swedish–Russian War (1554-1557) an amphibious operation, which eventually ended the war, led via Finland to Nöteborg and immediately back to Sweden, after both adversaries had signed the peace treaty of Novgorod (2 April 1557).[18] Longer stays abroad were costly not only for the Crown's treasury, but also for the village communities, which had to contribute to financing a war.

18 Sundberg, *Svenska krig*, 34–41; Ingvar Sjöblom, *Svenska sjöofficerare under 1500-talet* (Forum navale skriftserie 60), Phil. Diss. (Malmö: Universus Academic Press, 2016), 221–231.

A successful hit-and-run operation was based, though, on one indispensable precondition: the near to total Swedish naval dominance on the Baltic Sea. Without *dominium maris Baltici*, troops on the continent could become isolated, because there was, as already mentioned, no naval base outside mainland Sweden. And port cities, or at least an apt landing spot, had of course to be available in all operational areas.[19] To give just one example here, I would like to stress an episode from the Swedish–Brandenburgian War (1674–1679), which partially was related to Swedish-Pomerania. At the beginning of the war, a contingent of the Swedish *Uppland Regiment* was stationed in Stettin and other towns of the province. After the Danish naval victory in Køge Bay (1–2 July 1677),[20] the Swedish garrison in Pomerania was isolated, because the Danish navy since then had dominated the Baltic Sea and interrupted Swedish amphibious activities. This example clearly shows the weak point of the Swedish amphibious concept and its dependency from Swedish dominance at sea. To send reinforcements was nearly impossible. The Swedish garrison troops in Pomerania soon had to withdraw to Stralsund. Hereupon, an amphibious war started within the province's borders. In January 1678, a Swedish commando unit embarked in Stralsund, debarked on the island of Rügen, which meanwhile was occupied by Danish troops, and prevailed over united Danish and Brandenburger troops in the battle of Warksow (9 January 1678).[21] This however proved to be a Pyrrhic victory, because Danish-Brandenburger troops reconquered Rügen in September 1678 and besieged Stralsund, which surrendered on 15 October 1678. True, Sweden retrieved, by the peace treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (19 July 1679),[22] all Pomeranian territories except the region of Stettin, but the Swedish garrison had to leave their fortresses and withdraw to Sweden.[23]

But not all port cities were subject to amphibious operations. During the Great Northern War, for example, only the harbours of Reval, Riga, and Pernau served as debarkation points for Swedish naval vessels and soldiers, whereas the harbours of Narva and Nyen obviously had not the necessary facilities and capacity to receive a major number of ships and people and thus had to be approached by debarking ashore.[24] Even the port of Stralsund was rarely chosen as a destination of debarkations, probably because of its narrow port entrance. Instead, Peenemünder Schanze or the island of Rügen served

19 Julius Mankell, *Anteckningar rörande svenska regementers historia* (Örebro: Lindt, 1866), 295–296, accessed 30.06.2023, http://runeberg.org/mjantreg/0299.html.

20 *Slaget i Køge bugt 1. juli 1677: forudsætninger, forløb og følger*, ed. Hans Christian Bjerg (København: Søe-lieutenant-selskabet, 1977); Gunnar Åselius, "Köge bukt 1677: Danmarks största sjöseger," in: *Svenska slagfält*, Lars Ericsson et.al. (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 2003), 238–246.

21 Martin Meier, "Das Gefecht auf dem Warksower Felde," *Militärmuseum Brandenburg-Preußen* 3 (2007): 5.

22 Sundberg, *Svenska freder och stillestånd*, 294–295.

23 Herbert Ewe, *Geschichte der Stadt Stralsund* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1984), 184–185, 188.

24 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 333.

as debarkation spots without a harbour, wherefrom soldiers then could be transferred to Anklam, Stralsund or even to Prussian towns and cities. Thus, in 1628 two of the four Swedish *Norrland Regiments* – one under the Scottish officer Jakob Duwall and another under his compatriot Fritz Rosladin (c. 1589–1634) – were ordered to secure Stralsund against Albrecht von Wallenstein's (1583–1634) advances to Pomerania, whereas the remaining two regiments, commanded by the Scotsman Axel Duwall (1595–1630) and Lennart Torstensson (1603–1651), were send to Prussia and garrisoned there.[25]

(2) Amphibious operations with a temporary deployment of troops in the vicinity of cities

The more Sweden established its control and power over provinces along the southern Baltic Sea coastline, the more it had to do in order to see to the safeguard of these conquered areas, and, of course, of the cities located there – for debarkation reasons, but also because these cities constituted crucial fortified places, which offered the possibility to hold one's ground, even when the enemy had conquered large parts in the region. But forced control did not necessarily lead to permanent Swedish garrisons within the cities. They served, however, as centres for provisions, crafts, commerce, and, if necessary, also as a protective back-up in times of hostile invasions, as in the case of Elbing and Danzig in 1626 and 1627, when Swedish winter cantonments were built up in the vicinity of these cities, because the campaign against the king of Poland could not be finished in 1626.[26]

(3) Amphibious operations ending up in the establishment of Swedish garrisons

Sometimes, Sweden's military command laid stress on maintaining permanent garrisons in the cities, especially when after a siege and conquest the city had to be secured against hostile assaults and sieges and when a city had harbours at its disposal, which could be used by Swedish naval vessels for repair, supply, and/or as points of debarkation. This pattern seemingly contradicted the amphibious nature of Swedish warfare. But at close range, even here the amphibious character shows through. One function of maintaining permanent garrisons in the Baltic provinces was to secure bridgeheads and port cities against possible Russian and Polish invasions; another to maintain communication lines, via the Baltic port cities of Narva, Reval, Riga, or Pernau, with mainland Sweden. These garrisons only existed for a few years, sometimes even less than a year, before soldiers returned to their garrisons or private homes in mainland Sweden. One can find examples of this double role of Estonian and Livonian port cities from the Livonian War (1558–1583) over the Ingrian War (1610– 1617), Swedish–Polish War (1600–1629), Thirty

25 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 295–296.

26 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 67. Details of the campaign of 1626, in: David Krutmejer, ed., *Svea Rikes Drotset Grefve Per Brahes Tänkebok* (Stockholm: Carl Delén, 1806), 10–12, accessed 30.06.2023, http://hdl.handle.net/2077/42224.

Years' War and Swedish–Brandenburg War up to the Great Northern War.[27] From 1630 to 1638, sections of the Swedish *Helsinge Regiment*, an ingredient of Gustav II Adolf's invasion army in 1630, were garrisoned in Stettin. In 1638, one half of these troops were transferred to Demmin (Pomerania). And in 1642, a squadron of the *Helsinge Regiment* was shipped from Sweden to Wismar to be garrisoned there up to the end of the Thirty Years' War. A Swedish regiment was garrisoned in Pomerania even after the peace of Westphalia (1648), most of the time in Stettin, but occasionally also in Anklam und Greifswald. Another regiment was created in 1703 as "Pommersches Dragonerregiment," garrisoned in Demmin, Wolgast and Anklam.[28] During the Swedish-Brandenburg War, King Charles XI (ruled 1660/72–1697) shipped, in 1675, a battalion of the *Queen Dowager's Mounted Regiment* to be garrisoned in Riga. In turn, Riga's Swedish garrison, composed of soldiers from the *Västergöta-Dal Regiment*, was ordered back to Sweden in 1677.[29]

So, even garrisons in port cities had, to a certain degree, an amphibious character. More often than not, military units were exchanged after a short time and sent elsewhere: sometimes back home in order to relieve a military district in Sweden from high financial burdens, but sometimes even because the unit was needed and was more suitable in some other operational area. In 1631, the king's lifeguard (*Svea Livgarde*) was, obviously for the safeguard of the truce of Altmark, quartered in Königsberg, before it left for Mecklenburg the following spring to participate in Sweden's campaign in Germany.[30]

Apart from tactical and operational reasons, there also might have been another motive for transfers: conflicts with city inhabitants. To establish a city garrison meant, during the 17th century, to either quarter soldiers in burgher-houses or house them in camps outside the city. Military barracks did not exist in those times, and fortresses inhabited by exclusively military staff occurred only within the borders of mainland Sweden, but not in Sweden's occupied or annexed territories. As a consequence, missing pay, bad accommodations, prostitution, alcohol abuse, brawls, boredom, conflicts between regular soldiers and mercenaries, mutinies and the like led to increasing aggression and manifold tensions with civilians. There is a plentitude of evidence for these clashes from all cities where Swedish garrisons were established.[31]

27 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 219, 293.

28 Mankell, *Anteckningar,* 296; Cfr. Stanislaw Horoszko, "Die militärische Bedeutung der Provinz Pommern für Schweden im 17. Jahrhundert," in: *Unter der schwedischen Krone. Pommern nach dem Westfälischen Frieden*, ed. Ivo Asmus (Greifswald: Stiftung Pommersches Landesmuseum, 1998), 41–50.

29 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 321, 327.

30 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 5.

31 Carl von Bonsdorff, "Finska garnisoner i Östersjöprovinserna," *Historiallinen arkisto* 17 (1902): 268–276; Gunnar Artéus, "En vetenskapligt obelyst lokalsamhällestyp: den svenska garnisonsstaden 1620–1985," in: *Den nordiska garnisonsstaden*, ed. Gunnar Artéus, Kari Selén (Jyväskylä: Finska Historiska Samfundet, 1988), 23–39; Margus Laidre, *Schwedische Garnisonen in Est- und Livland 1654–1699* (Tallinn: Valgus, 1990).

But no matter how many conflicts and whatever military operational necessities, artillery was no part of amphibious warfare. Artillerists either cooperated with the Swedish garrisons or were left in the port cities, even without a Swedish infantry garrison, in order to cooperate with the local city militia. In Riga at the end of Charles XI's reign, for example, a unit of Swedish artillery was stationed in the city and had never been ordered back to Sweden. The reason for this interesting fact was probably that artillery and its ammunition were heavy military equipment that was too burdensome and even dangerous to be transferred at sea back and forth. Additionally, artillerists were a highly specialised category of soldiers, which were not advisable to be moved back and forth either, if one wanted to keep a certain continuity in expert knowledge about the handling of cannons and other equipment. This applied not only to the case of Riga, but to all Swedish provinces and even to areas of ongoing campaigns outside the borders of the Swedish realm.[32] It was for this reason, but also due to the fact that many soldiers of the "Swedish" armies were non-Swedish mercenaries, that the artillerists' command language was German, the *lingua franca* of the Baltic Sea region, whereas all other native Swedish troops in Baltic cities outside mainland Sweden were commanded in the Swedish language. Even this observation points to the amphibious character of (native) Swedish soldiers, which at least during the 17th century always started their campaigns in Sweden and moved, before long, back to their homeland, whereas troops with a non-Swedish command language like the artillerists and others stayed on-site and obviously were not part of amphibious operations.

(4) Amphibious operations using coastal cities as centres for the distribution of troops

Another important role of port cities was their function as a distribution centre for troops to other operation areas or smaller neighbouring towns (without a harbour). In 1621, for example, King Gustav II Adolf shipped parts of the *Norrland Regiment* and *Svea Lifeguard* from Sweden to Riga to siege the city. After its conquest, these troops were stationed in the city as a garrison, but they were also distributed, in 1626, to Dünamünde, Dirschau, and Braunsberg, in order to form a back-up for the conquest of port cities on the Prussian coastline during the war against Poland (1600–1629). They even stayed there after the truce of Altmark in 1629.[33] Similarly, sections of the *Svea Lifeguard* and *Uppland Regiment* remained, after the peace treaty of Oliva (1660), as garrisons in Riga, Stettin, and other Pomeranian cities in order to safeguard Poland's compliance with the articles of the agreement. Besides the city militias, they were an important ingredient

32 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 150.

33 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 3, 231, 280, 295, 354; Cfr. *Svea Rikes Drotset Grefve Per Brahes Tänkebok*, 14–17; Ralph Tuchtenhagen, "Riga wird schwedisch (1621)," *Nordeuropaforum* (2021), accessed 30.06.2023, https://portal.vifanord.de/blog/riga-wird-schwedisch-1621.

of the Swedish security system on the other side of the Baltic Sea.[34] But once a situation seemed to be under control, these troops were dismissed and sent back to Sweden.[35]

"Amphibious personalities"

Dealing with the amphibious character of Swedish warfare and the Baltic port cities' role for it, one ought to not only concentrate on structural questions like embarkment, debarkation, port facilities, garrisons, supplies, communication, or the distribution of troops. There is also a personality aspect shining through the matter-of-factly accounts of regiment histories and military statistics. It is quite obvious that soldiers conducting amphibious warfare (*miles amphibii*) had abilities, which summarising could be called the "amphibious personality." The mere fact that they did not belong either to the land or the sea forces, but were trained to fight both at sea and ashore and used to switch between both categories of warfare, made them not mere foot soldiers transported on ships to their next operational area; they usually were even skillful mariners, who could operate as marines. Some of their officers not only commanded ships on the Baltic or North Sea, but led their armies as field marshals or generals to places far away from shores and harbours. And it is intriguing that they did so without knowledgeable differences in the quality and velocity of their operations.

This phenomenon already occurred in the very beginning of Sweden's great power period. So, admiral Klas Kristersson Horn (1517–1566), one of the personalities who substantially contributed to early Swedish naval fame, had started as a simple private. Later, he was decorated several times for his successful military operations during the Nordic Seven Years' War (1563–1570), where he commanded military units against Denmark, sometimes as head of the entire Swedish Baltic navy or individual navy squadrons, sometimes as an officer ashore in various operational areas. At times, he also combined sea-land-operations, which obviously was of the essence in order to get ahead of the so far dominating powers of the Baltic Sea, Denmark and Lübeck. From the middle of the 1560s, Sweden thus was on its way to take over *dominium maris Baltici* and keep it up to the end of the 17th century.

Even more interesting is the case of Erik Ryning (1592–1654), admiral and councillor of the realm (*riksråd*), governor of several naval bases and port cities in the Baltic

34 About the military organisation in Swedish Pomerania, Cfr. Werner Buchholz, *Pommern* (Berlin: Siedler, 1999), 237–304, especially 254; Cfr. Johann Friedrich Zöllner, *Reise durch Pommern nach der Insel Rügen und einem Theile des Herzogthums Mecklenburg im Jahre 1795 in Briefen* (Berlin: Hans J. Herbst, 1797), 168.

35 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 14.

(like Stralsund, Riga, Älvsborg, Visby), and head of the Swedish navy.[36] In 1628, he served as a governor of the city of Elbing, commanding a unit of Sweden's *Södermanlands regemente*. One year later, Ryning became a diplomat, namely as Swedish negotiator towards the truce of Altmark (1629) between Poland and Sweden, before he was promoted admiral of the Swedish navy, operating in the waters outside Thorn, Elbing, and Königsberg.[37] In 1630, he commanded the Swedish invasion army which landed on the island of Usedom. He subsequently became chief of the Swedish navy's contingent in charge of the safeguarding of supply lines from Sweden to Pomerania and for the defence of the city of Stralsund. In 1632, he commanded a navy squadron and afterwards ground forces marching from Stralsund to Wismar, successfully conquered the city of Wismar and destroyed Wallenstein's respective Habsburg's Baltic navy, which operated in the region.[38] In short, he was a commander who successfully acted afloat and ashore, sometimes consecutively, sometimes synchronically, sometimes merely as a coordinator, sometimes in person as a navy or field officer.

Even entire regiments or units of regiments were trained and used for amphibious operations and able to operate both as marines and soldiers on the ground. Sections of the Swedish *Helsinge regemente*, for example, a regiment, which originally had been established as a military unit of ground forces and held in a stand-by position in Sweden at the beginning of the Swedish-Danish War 1643–1645 ("Torstensson War"), was later used for navy operations in Baltic waters.[39] In 1674, three companies of *Västerbottens regemente* were stationed as a garrison in the Ingrian fortress of Nyenskans. Two years later, the same soldiers transmuted to marines serving on warships of the Swedish navy – which, admittedly, did not end well in this case, because they suffered heavy defeats in the same year. Nevertheless, the pure fact that they operated in both war arenas alike, is in itself remarkable.[40]

The Swedish army obviously was, from the last third of the sixteenth century, effectively and deliberately cultivating amphibious capabilities. And this turned out to be a unique phenomenon in Europe. Every Swedish soldier should, under ideal circumstances, possess "amphibious" competences – which certainly did not really always happen everywhere, but in principle, all Swedish armed forces could be ordered to fight both afloat and ashore and thus respond to Sweden's particular geographical preconditions to wage war at all against its neighbours on the other side of the Baltic Sea.

36 Björn Asker, "Erik Ryning," *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, vol. 31 (Stockholm: Bonniers, 2000–2002), 141, accessed 28.06.2023, https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sbl/artikel/6291.

37 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 67.

38 On the conquest of Wismar and the related naval operation see: Philip Tober, *Wismar im Dreißigjährigen Krieg 1627–1648. Untersuchungen zur Wirtschafts-, Bau- und Sozialgeschichte* (Berlin: LIT, 2007), 31.

39 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 296.

40 Mankell, *Anteckningar*, 344.

Changes in the system of amphibious warfare after 1721

The aforementioned observations apply first and foremost to Sweden's political and military development during its great power period. The loss of eastern Finnish territories, the Baltic provinces (Ingria, Estonia, Livonia) and the duchies of Bremen and Verden after Sweden's defeats during the Great Northern War involved several changes in Sweden's approach to amphibious warfare. One would expect that, besides the already mentioned founding of new port cities and bases for the Swedish navy due to the loss of Viborg, the reduction of possible points of debarkation led to a concentration of amphibious activities in Swedish Pomerania and Wismar, which were the only remaining Swedish ruled territories outside mainland Sweden-Finland during the 18th century. However, the 1680 reforms of the Swedish recruitment system (*nyare indelningsverket*), which provided Swedish soldiers with a strip of land and a tiny farmhouse in times of peace, resulted not only in the emergence of a new class of petty land owners, but probably also affected the system of amphibious warfare. The newly shaped farmer-soldiers (*indelta soldater*) were primarily trained to fight ashore. Maybe for this reason or another, Swedish amphibious warfare in the 18th century tended to favour permanent garrisons overseas and to restrict naval activities to the transportation of ground forces from mainland Sweden to Swedish Pomerania and Wismar.[41]

To give just two examples here: In 1720, a Swedish infantry regiment, the *Queen's [Ulrika Eleonora's]*[42] *Battalion of Foot Guards*, was created by an amalgamation of two regiments from the provinces of Uppland and Västergötland. It was relocated to Sweden during the 1750s, but nevertheless participated in all major Swedish military operations during the 18th century, such as the Seven Years' War ("Pomeranian War," 1757–1762), Gustav III's war against Russia (1788–1790) and the Napoleonic Wars (1807–1810, 1812/13, 1814), before it was dissolved in 1815 and partially integrated into Prussian-Pomeranian military units. All war theatres mentioned were situated outside mainland Sweden and required overseas transportation, but there is not one single case known in which the *Queen's Battalion* was used for naval operations.[43] The "Garrison Regiment of Stralsund" (*Garnisonsregementet i Stralsund*), founded in 1721, operated, under various denominations and up to 1798, on both sides of the Baltic Sea. It was stationed in Stralsund from 1729 to 1746 and 1758 to 1766 respectively. In the remaining time, it served various purposes in Southern Sweden, primarily in Landskrona. During their

41 About *Nyare indelningsverket* see: Sven Ågren, *Karl XI: s indelningsverk för armén: bidrag till dess historia åren 1679–1697*, Phil. Diss. (Uppsala: Wretmans Boktryckeri, 1922); Janne Backlund, *Rusthållarna i Fellingsbro 1684–1748* (Uppsala: Uppsalas universitet, 1993).

42 The fallen king Charles XII's (ruled 1697–1718) sister, who ruled Sweden from 1718 to 1720.

43 Helmut Backhaus, "Quellen zur Personengeschichte Schwedisch-Pommerns in Stockholmer Archiven," *Vorträge zur mecklenburgischen Familienforschung* 5 (1995): 61–67, accessed 30.06.2023, http://www.studienstelleog.de/bestaende/stockh-backhaus.html.

Stralsund deployment, the soldiers' uniforms reflected the colours of Stralsund's city arms from the Hansa period (red and white). The regiment's company flag, however, showed the Swedish imperial colours (gold and blue). This conjuncture of German and Swedish symbols points to the fact that the Stralsund regiment obviously had a binational mission and ought to have served both Swedish and Swedish Pomeranian interests. Like the *Queen's Battalion*, it required permanent sea transportation and, in this sense, could be characterised as an amphibious unit. Nevertheless, even here no participation in genuine naval warfare has ever been bequeathed.[44]

Conclusion

To conclude, Swedish armies of the great power period and the 18th century were not only amphibious in character, but also constantly on the move. They were trained to operate at sea and ashore in equal measure and quite often relocated. A high mobility was a quasi-part of their trademark. As a consequence, one does find only a few examples of permanent Swedish garrisons in Baltic Sea port cities during the 16th and 17th centuries. There existed a few garrisons in Sweden's German provinces during the 18th century, but they were obviously not amphibiously trained the way they had been during the two previous centuries. The latter observation seems to be related to the revised Swedish recruiting system of 1680 (*nyare indelningsverket*), which rather prefigured a modern style standing army and allowed the maintenance of military units in operational areas, even outside mainland Sweden as garrison troops.[45] The rarity of permanent garrisons is also related to the fact that Sweden, during the Great Northern War, had lost most of its provinces in the Baltic Sea region and was able to concentrate its military activities in Wismar and Swedish Pomerania, especially in the cities of Stralsund, Greifswald, Anklam, Demmin, and Barth.[46] This also meant that these cities, where during the 17th century garrisons had existed only for a couple of months or years in the aftermath of Swedish campaigns in the southern and eastern Baltic regions,

44 Riksarkivet / Krigsarkivet Stockholm: KrA/1691: Garnisonsregementet i Stralsund (1721–1798), accessed 21.09.2021, https://riksarkivet.se/taby.

45 Cfr. Backhaus, "Quellen zur Personengeschichte,": "Vor 1680 wechselten die in Pommern stationierten Garnisonsverbände relativ häufig, nach 1680 bildete sich ein festes Kader von 2 bis 3 geworbenen Garnisonsregimentern heraus. Nach 1720 bestanden die pommerschen Garnisonen meistens aus zwei, zwischen 1749 und 1766 aus drei bis vier geworbenen Regimentern. Es handelt sich um das Leibregiment der Königin (1720–1815) und die Stralsunder Garnisonsregimenter Dohna/Sprengtporten (in Pommern 1729–1766), Spens/Engelbrechten (1749–1815) und Posse/Cronhielm (in Pommern 1752–1764)."

46 For garrisons in Pomerania during the 18th century see: Georg Tessin, "Wismars schwedische Regimenter im Nordischen Krieg," *Mecklenburgische Jahrbücher* 101 (1937): 101–156; Robert Oldach, *Stadt und Festung Stralsund. Die schwedische Militärpräsenz in Schwedisch-Pommern 1721–1807* (Köln et.al.: Böhlau, 2018); Robert Oldach, "Das Einquartierungswesen in der schwedischen Festung Stralsund 1721–1807," *Militär und Gesellschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit* 16 (2012), 2: 218–256.

changed their function from mere relays for the distribution and protection of troops to genuine garrison cities.

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English version: Mark Atkinson

SUMMARY

The paper addresses one of the typical operational tactics during Sweden's period as a great power, in later historiography called "amphibious warfare." In the thematic context of a history of Baltic port cities, it is connected to the question of which role port cities could play for amphibious operations in times of war and peace respectively. The following account therefore deals with specific aspects of amphibious operations such as embarkments and debarkations in port cities, logistical problems and garrisons within and outside port cities, questions of supply, transfer, relocations and the housing of soldiers, conflicts between burghers and soldiers, and "amphibious personalities" (*milites amphibii*) in general. As a general thesis, one can state, that an underlying precondition for all amphibious operations was Sweden's domination of the Baltic Sea routes by a powerful navy. As a consequence, amphibious operations faced severe difficulties or were completely impossible, when this domination was lost to enemy navies.

Milites amphibii: Wojskowa rola bałtyckich miast portowych dla Szwecji jako mocarstwa, 1561–1815

Słowa kluczowe: Historia wojskowości, Szwecja XVII i XVIII wiek, operacje morskie, transfery wojsk, militarna rola bałtyckich miast portowych, szwedzka dominacja morska, wojna amfibijna

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł porusza jeden z typowych taktycznych sposobów działania w okresie, gdy Szwecja była mocarstwem, nazywany później w historiografii "wojną amfibijną." W kontekście tematycznym historii bałtyckich miast portowych odnosi się to do pytania, jaką rolę mogły pełnić miasta portowe w operacjach amfibijnych w czasach wojny i pokoju. Niniejszy tekst zajmuje się zatem specyficznymi aspektami operacji amfibijnych, takimi jak załadunki i wyładunki w miastach portowych, problemy logistyczne oraz garnizony w miastach portowych i poza nimi, kwestie zaopatrzenia, transferów, relokacji i zakwaterowania żołnierzy, konflikty między mieszczanami a żołnierzami oraz ogólnie pojęte "osobowości amfibijne" (*milites amphibii*). Ogólną tezą jest stwierdzenie, że podstawowym warunkiem wszystkich operacji amfibijnych była dominacja Szwecji nad bałtyckimi szlakami morskimi, zapewniana przez potężną flotę. W konsekwencji, operacje amfibijne napotykały poważne trudności lub były całkowicie niemożliwe, gdy ta dominacja została utracona na rzecz flot nieprzyjaciela.

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