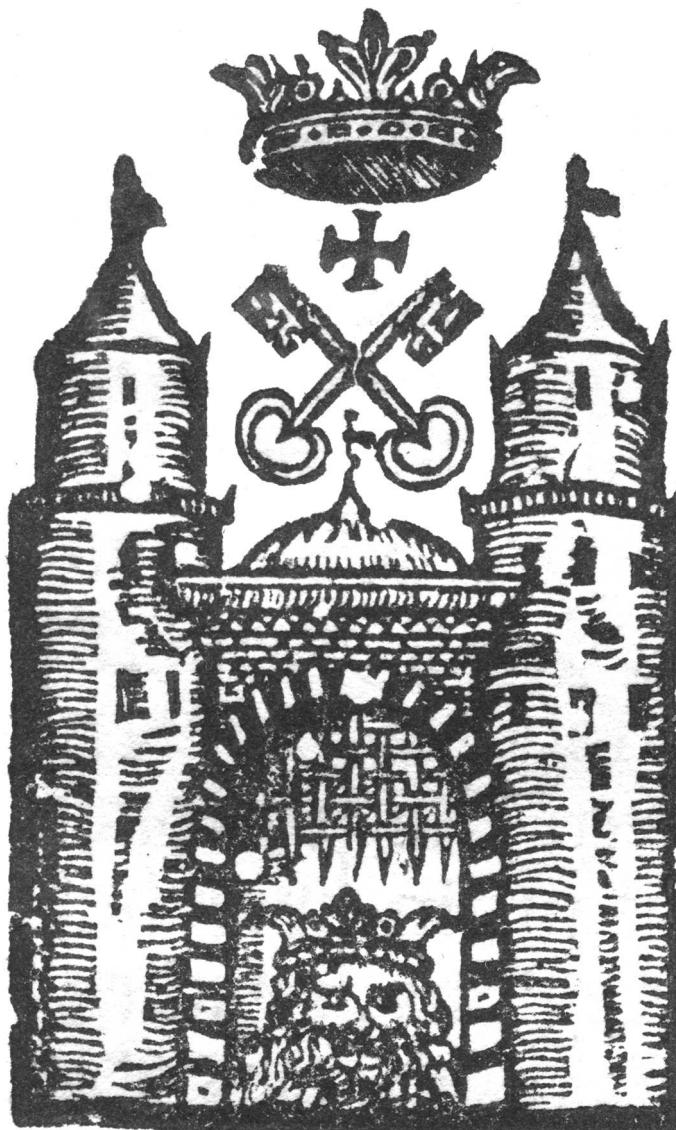


**1000 SHILLINGS**



Torben Hoomann



# 1000 SHILLINGS

SHILLINGS AND FARTHINGS FROM SWEDISH-OCCUPIED  
RIGA AND ELBING AND THEIR COUNTERFEITS

VOL. 1 - THE BOOK

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Version 1.3; the NIEA Award (Finalist), the CIPA EVYY Book Award (1<sup>st</sup> Place) and the NYC Big Book Award (Winner) were given for version 1.2 of this Vol. 1

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Cover image taken from 'PRIVILEGIUM NOBILITATIS SENATUS RIGENSIS.', unbound Latin | German original print on 12 pages, print-signed by Hedwig Eleonora in the name of Carl XI in Stockholm, 23 November 1660, *Cum Sigillo magno pensili*

History is a matter of time. If we do not spend time, we cannot understand history. And since time is money, this book is about historical coins that made history and were the money of their time.

To my family



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## Foreword

Every book has a background and the preface should tell something about it. It should take the reader by the hand and offer an introduction to the world that forms the subject of the work. Some hurry on and want to reach the core, some prefer to grasp the external situation that forms a breeding ground and stable support for the tree of the story. And those who only read the preface need the most information on how the work found its way into the world.

This book has an individual background as well. One would like to hear it from a valued friend in conversation, and when the teapot has been emptied and the candle has burned down, one realises how quickly time has passed. I felt the same way when writing this book. It was supposed to be the conclusion of about a decade of studying the subject, which was brought about by two simultaneously motivating and warm conversations with PRIV.-DOZ. DR. BERNHARD PROKISCH in the Linz Castle Museum (Austria) about other coins. In the course of time, I noticed that many questions are either not answered in the existing literature on the subject, or it is hardly possible to gain a comprehensive overview of it due to wide scattering and incomplete information. However, the coins dealt with had become available in great numbers in the meantime, so that it seemed time to compile the existing knowledge treasure and to provide it with new information, answers and additions. The situational framework was provided by the fateful rise of the pandemic, which, apart from its terrible nature, offered the opportunity to slow down everyday life somewhat and to reflect on what counted more in earlier years, namely the concentrated dedication to one matter, the inner experience, the mental digestion process that leads to that satisfying feeling of inner growth when going to bed. The occasion of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the conquest of Riga by Sweden under the command of Gustav II Adolf on 16 September 1621 can also be mentioned here as an occasion for writing the book. In fact, I looked at the first draft of the manuscript for the first time in mid-September 2021, although it still needed additions in many places. In this respect, there is an interesting parallel to that time - but honestly unintentional - because Sweden still had to deal with lengthy processes of integrating Riga into the empire, which, according to LILJEDAHL, was probably not expected to happen in this way. Further comparisons would be presumptuous, so let us take the providence of our time as the stimulus for the creation of the book.

And so, as if by magic, countless teapots emptied as the topics lined up. It would be an exaggeration to say that I was aware of the full extent of the later work from the beginning. However, as it was close to my heart to cover all aspects of the small Swedish-Livonian trade coins to so far that the interested reader is given a complete picture, the later size of the work did not become a target parameter, but a result to be awaited. Nevertheless, in many details there will remain further questions to be answered. This is unavoidable due to the interconnection with all the subject areas and fields of knowledge touched upon. My personal hope is to achieve a balance between the amount of information necessary to cover the topic and the restriction to a manageable total amount of knowledge. If you, as a valued reader, succeed in using the stimuli given in the book as a springboard for solving the respective special questions, a main intention of the work will have been achieved.

If I succeed in arousing the same amazement in you as I felt on the way to dealing with the subject in view of the fact that it is these small, rather inconspicuous mass coins, of all things, that allow so much to be deduced here about their history and production technique and not the large, splendid, valuable higher nominals, then it is a pleasure for me from the bottom of my heart. But it would be no less gratifying to see this work prove to be an aid and stimulus to further publications. As will be shown later, the complexity and diversity of the subject are too great for one person alone to make all the contributions. It is therefore wonderfully suited not only to use the word 'collectors' community', but to live it. It offers the possibility that the isolated, subjective collecting hobby becomes a community effort that is not limited to the academic scope of work, but allows for a fluid transfer of experiences and observations into the overall body of knowledge and there the emergence of knowledge gain that represents added value to the

community. This added value can be, for example, the possibility of supplementing missing information on off-centre cut or incompletely preserved coins, thus significantly increasing the usefulness of a coin for a collection, but also the addition of information on a hoard find. Academic topics such as the study of the corrosion history of a coin are touched upon. Technically interested persons can gain insights into the production and minting process by means of the existing production errors and contemporary quality defects. For those who are systematically interested, I have prepared a chapter very early on with a proposal for structuring a collection on the basis of die attributes. It can be broken down to sorting at the level of individual dies and seems to fulfil the claim of universal usability for any coinage system - but at least the usability for the coins of the discussed and adjacent regions and periods is proven. And last but not least, the use of the respective design elements on a coin provides answers to questions of style of the time and perhaps enables conclusions to be drawn about the history of mentality.

Numerous images in the text and a continuously pictured, separate catalogue with type sheets of almost all coins used in the book and further coins provide pictorial evidence of the knowledge gained. The principle applies: what is not shown is considered a conjecture and is described in this way. Methodologically, this book is interdisciplinary. Several scientific disciplines have to be taken into account here. My personal claim lies in the fulfilment of scientific principles. In the hope that I have succeeded in doing so, I apologise if the style does not correspond to the expectations of one or the other discipline.

Anyone who writes a book while living in a family environment definitely needs the support of his loved ones. They can both slow down and boost the project. In this respect, I would like to thank my wife TATJANA for the great, loving patience she showed during the writing of the book and for her support in all the many situations that family life entails. In our conversations I received many helpful hints from her that helped me to improve and supplement the contents. I hope that this work will be a good example and role model for our common son TJARK, and that it will one day motivate him to master his own tasks in life, whether they are self-chosen or come to him from outside.

Braunschweig, in the year 2022

**Torben Hoomann**

# 1 Introduction

The small Livonian trade coins of the Polish and Swedish occupation periods show some consistent characteristics that make them similar to each other and at the same time distinguish them from other coin types. To present and classify those from the Swedish era is the main purpose of this work. The distinction is necessary because it is easy to attribute one observation to the cause of another peculiarity and then run into confusing misinterpretations. But once one is familiar with the matter, it is not particularly difficult to separate neatly.

It was the general conditions that caused the peculiarities. They were intended as circulation coins for common people. That is, they were needed as the smallest nominals, but in large numbers, so that items of daily use could be traded in single units. At the same time, the available raw materials had to suffice for the coinage. Although common people, just like the higher social classes, had a desire to own precious metals, only as much silver could be distributed as could be obtained on the market at economically viable conditions. Consequently, the parameters raw material availability and coin demand led to declining noble metal content and coin weights over time. A natural limit was reached when coins became so small and light that they could no longer be handled. The result was faster wear, and with decreasing silver content, accelerated corrosion set in. Gold content was inconceivable in small coins anyway. A measure introduced much earlier and elsewhere to control the problem was applied in the minting of bracteates, which were mechanically stabilised by their corrugated shape, similar to that found on thin-walled PET beverage bottles today. Bracteates were withdrawn after a short time for several reasons and had to be exchanged for new ones, which usually happened faster than their coin image wore out.<sup>1</sup>

In Livonia, however, the situation was different. The predominantly rural population tended to save up financial reserves and bury the money, which can be seen today in the numerous hoard finds, some of which are presented by CEPLITE, for instance. Thus, according to Gresham's law, old, familiar coins were continually withdrawn from circulation and there was a natural, constant need for new coins. In this case, too, the circulation time of money tended to be limited, but enhanced corrosion conditions prevailed in the ground, even causing coins to bake together. That small shillings and farthings (the latter name used in this book as a synonym for 1/24 thalers) survived the centuries in dry collections is the absolute exception and we would do well to assume that practically only material from ground finds circulates on the market and that these are the coins on the basis of which we must gain our knowledge today. As an advantage, it can be mentioned that certain corrosion phenomena, if they come together serendipitously, definitely offer an aesthetic added value and can also tell us something about the destiny of the coin in the ground. If, for example, we see a greenish patina with embedded quartz crystals, it is quite likely that the coin was lying in sandy soil near the surface with contact to rainwater and oxygen, which reached the coin well through the porous substrate. In addition, the coin was probably lying alone, because direct contact with a neighbouring coin would have kept the sand away, which adheres to the coin. So if you own such coins yourself, think about this before focusing exclusively on the degree of preservation. Added value is a question of expectation and perspective. To broaden the latter in a purposeful way is another aim of this book.

The material-specific chapters can also be generally applied to other coins of similar composition, i.e. all those billon coins with a silver content of less than 30%. Beyond that it becomes difficult, because a much better cleanability occurs, which coin traders and many collectors like to use generously. The result is that the vast majority of farthings that are commercially available shine in the brightest silver lustre and no longer have any patina. Actually, this is a pity, because every now and then an uncleaned specimen in circulation could be an interesting object of study even for amateur collectors. At this point it should be noted that a chapter on cleaning the coins discussed follows later in the book. In anticipation of this, a

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<sup>1</sup> Luschin von Ebengreuth, p. 260 et sq.; for further information on short-lived coins like bracteates see also Svensson 2013

warning should be given here that careless or inexperienced attempts to clean billon coins can destroy especially those with a low silver content in a short time. Examples of this can be found in the catalogue and are also discussed in the book.

In addition to this major, important topic of material and corrosion properties of the coin metal, other conspicuous features of the coins are also gradually dealt with. The implementation of mass production at a time when industrialisation had not yet begun and the need for large quantities led to many manufacturing errors that can be traced back to the semi-manual production process. The need to classify and explain them arises from the observation of the many identification and description errors that occur again and again in trade as well as in descriptions of collections. For instance, off-centred cut coins, where the year has been clipped, are often classified as 's.d.', which is (almost?) never correct. Off-centre strikes are also often cited as errors. 'Strike' is wrong in the narrow sense of the word for roller-minted coins and is also used synonymously for off-centre cutting. Increased attention will be paid to these topics in the production-oriented sections. Finally, the evolution of coin designs will be discussed in depth, including an attempt to identify all the punches used in production. This mammoth task can hardly be conclusively dealt with in this work, but the largest part should be covered afterwards. With the identification of individual punches as partial or whole die elements, it will be possible to add missing information, because there was always a very specific set of punches in place at the time of the creation of a die, whereby, anticipating the content, it must be mentioned that different punches were also used in parallel for the same design element. Who would already think that a missing year can often be determined unambiguously and reliably from the analysis of the type of inner and outer circle elements around the legend plus perhaps the crown type?

Last but not least, this work is to be understood as pioneering work, on the basis of which the foundation stone for a complete identification and sequencing of all dies ever used for these coins is to be laid. This work can then no longer be done by one person alone and thus requires the formation or takeover by an existing, interdisciplinary project team. The benefits would be extremely versatile and will be taken up again at various points in the book. For instance, the die identification would be an essential aid in clarifying whether a coin suspected of being stolen that appears for sale is in fact that coin. I.e., it would offer massive help to expert and forensic work and perhaps even help answer questions that would otherwise remain open. The approach in the book is such that, similar to the chapter on the Universal Coin Code (UCC), a transfer can be made to other coin types. Once all dies are identified, it is no longer important where the coins are distributed in the course of globalisation, which probably cannot be prevented anyway. To put it another way, the availability of free references on the market to classify new finds would become irrelevant. Let us take this ambitious and probably megalomaniac task as a sporting challenge and see together how far this book can get on the way to its goal!

## Content Structure

Of course, such a vast amount of knowledge can only be managed, tamed and made usable with stringent, logical structuring, which is why this work is built on a strict bottom-up logic. First, there will be a brief, illustrated introduction to the historical context. The chapter builds exclusively on existing literature and serves to keep the historical events during the minting activities in mind. Then the Universal Coin Code will be introduced, which is a purely new creation. It was developed to structure physical collections, especially as long as the sequence of dies is not determined. In addition, the so-called high-level code is used throughout the book to express briefly and precisely which coin type is being discussed. The usefulness of this will be intensively demonstrated in the further course of the book. In this respect, I ask for a little patience if this chapter seems a little dry. It was inserted with full intention and serves to cope with the unbelievable number of different dies. To put a figure on it, we are talking about something around a billion coins from just over 40 minting years for the shillings of both Riga mints and the forgeries from Suceava taken together. If you now calculate a low to medium 5-digit number of coin copies per die, you will have an idea of how many dies we will be talking about in the context of the book!

After the structural basis has been laid, a description of the metal extraction follows, for which the process according to GEORG AGRICOLA was chosen. It was written down a few decades before the Swedish occupation of Livonia and was also geographically close enough to Livonia. A certain proportion of the Harz silver obtained by AGRICOLA'S method is found in most of the silver coins of the region.<sup>2</sup> The technique of billon sheet production follows directly after. A detailed description of the billon microstructure forms the substantive groundwork for explaining the blanching procedure and the corrosion behaviour of the coins. With this the physical basis of the coins is portrayed. The next level is about the informative content of the coins applied by the minting process. The technique was roller minting for shillings and part of the farthings. Those rollers carried a cylinder with punched-in dies, so it can also be interesting what was between the dies on the cylinders. The analytical strategy we need to apply is to study off-centre cut out coins, where it is a blessing in this respect that so many production errors occurred. At this point in the text, we will have a more rounded picture of why the coins look the way we see them today and we will go into more detail about the quantities produced. What is then still missing is a design overview, so that we can get a sense of the style development of shillings and farthings over the decades. On the basis of a few selected designs, an attempt is also made to draw conclusions about their causes and to place them in their historical context. The final step is a listing of the respective design element types, with an attempt to sort them chronologically and classify them combinatorially. The end of the book is formed by a description of the analytical methods applied and reproductive punch experiments in the appendix in order to cross-check some methodological assumptions in the chapters before.

The catalogue forms the second volume and takes into account the knowledge gained by assigning the punch types in the respective type sheets of the coins, as far as the minting quality and the degree of preservation of the coins allow. Photographs in triple image size of the original complete the type sheets. The consistent assignment of UCC high- and deep-level codes shows and proves the usability of the system for the sorting of a physical collection.

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<sup>2</sup> Nord & Tronner 2020, p.7: Even silver coins for circulation in Sweden contained silver from mines in the Harz mountains or Erzgebirge.



## 2 Historical Background

### Riga

Riga is located at the mouth of the Daugava River on the Gulf of Riga, which opens to the Baltic Sea, and is today the capital of Latvia with a population of just under 700,000. The area was settled over 1800 years ago, long before the actual founding of the city. From its chequered, eventful and at times dramatic history, this book deals with the phase that began with the end of Polish rule and ended with the takeover by the Russians. It is the era of the Swedish occupation of Livonia that decisively changed the fate and appearance of the city. We can still see some traces of that time today. But how did it come about?

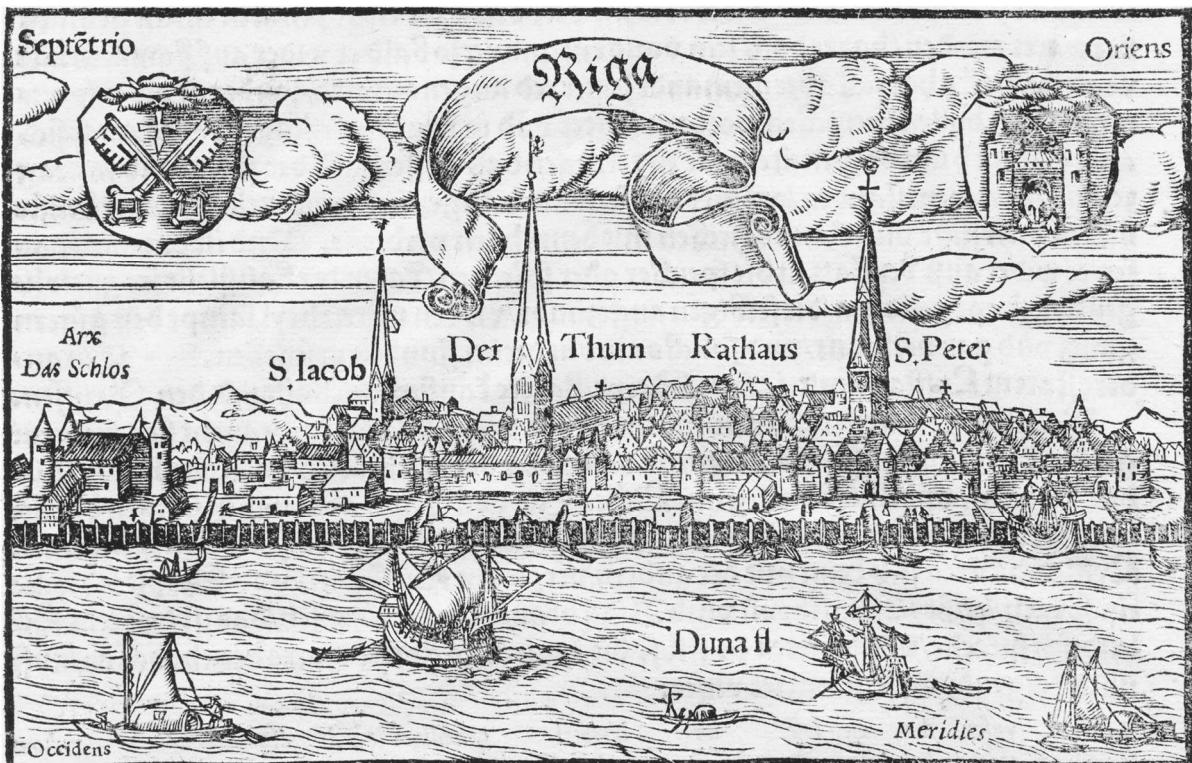


Fig. 1. View of Riga from SEBASTIAN MÜNSTER's 'Cosmographia', p. DCCCCXXXI from 1556. It shows the city around 1550, i.e. at the end of the Teutonic Order period (orig. size 15.8 x 10.1 cm).

### The situation at the end of the Polish era

In 1581, the free city of Riga was actually united with Lithuania since it had broken away from the Livonian Confederation in 1561, but had to stubbornly defend itself against the aggressive efforts of Jan Karol Chodkiewicz on behalf of Lithuania to interfere. Poland had become too powerful under Stephan Bathory, who was able to turn fully against Sweden because of his military successes against Russia and the subsequent peace treaty. When Riga submitted to the Polish crown, it fortunately managed to secure Bathory's homage with the *Corpus Privilegiorum Stephaneum* and with this, old privileges were formally confirmed, including municipal rights and freedoms as well as the Augsburg Confession.

In the following years, this was increasingly ignored by Poland. Important administrative positions were given mainly to Poles and Lithuanians, and expropriations were made in favour of Polish citizens. Under Bathory's successor Sigismund III Vasa, a son of King Johan III of Sweden, religious freedom continued to be restricted in favour of Catholicism with the Jesuits as the main profiteers in Riga. In addition, attempts were made to bring the legal system into line with the Polish system. Sigismund III took the Swedish

throne, but was deposed by the Swedish estates after a short time. It was therefore hardly surprising that the Livonian aristocracy in particular increasingly joined the Swedish party and that Poland gradually had to accept land losses in Livonia, which was also connected with the accession of the later victorious Gustav II Adolf to the Swedish throne. Riga had changed little in appearance and was spared structural interventions or severe destruction during these years, as Fig. 1 & Fig. 2 show in comparison.<sup>3</sup> Fig. 2 shows Riga short before of the Treaty of Stolbovo, which ended the Ingrian War between Sweden and Russia in 1617.

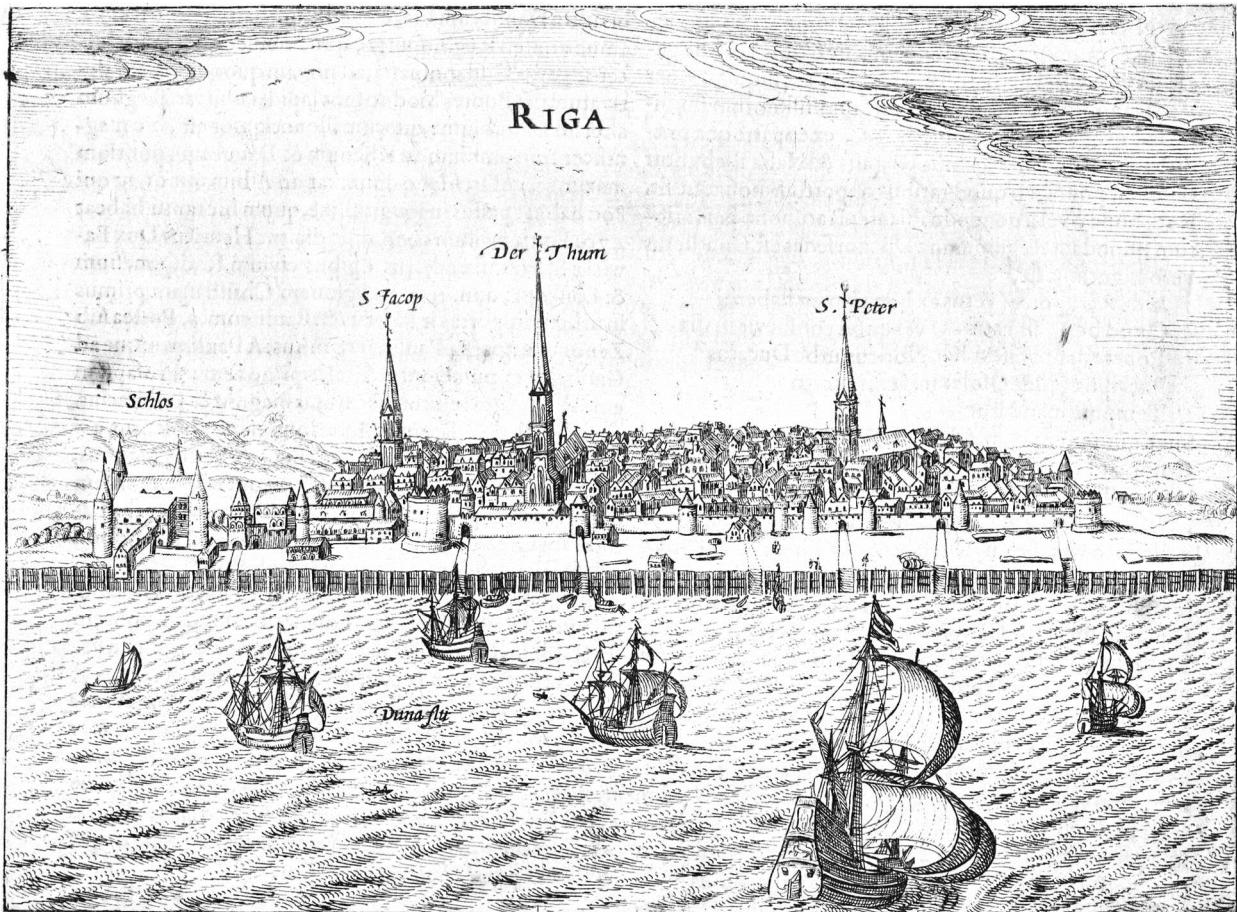


Fig. 2. View of Riga from PETRUS BERTIUS's 'Commentariorum rerum germanicarum libri tres', p. 648 from 1616. This is the time of growing Swedish influence in Livonia when Riga was still under Polish rule. The city layout has not remarkably changed during the Polish period (orig. size 18.6 x 13.8 cm).

## Submission to Gustav II Adolf

In 1621, Riga had already been under Polish rule for 40 years. The city's defences, which were rather weak for the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, were subjected to a siege by Swedish troops from August of that year.<sup>4</sup> Gustav II Adolf led the siege himself and achieved the opening of surrender negotiations by correspondence after four weeks. The city sent mayor Henrik von Ulenbroch and syndic Johan Ulrich to try to preserve Riga's neutrality between Sweden and Poland. The city, which traditionally represented mainly mercantile positions, had a great interest in maintaining trade with Poland-Lithuania and feared losses in the city's prosperity if they were to submit to the Swedes. Gustav Adolf though demanded the subjugation of the city. He showed the two men the power of the army and the ongoing preparations for the storming. A day later, on 15 September, the city decided to negotiate further, which ended in surrender to the Swedes. The

<sup>3</sup> "Geschichtliche Uebersicht der Grundlagen und [...]", p. 48-56

<sup>4</sup> From here on information is mainly taken from Liljedahl, p.72-174, important passages are additionally referenced more precisely. The descriptions by Mettig, pp. 316-328 are essentially the same.