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## The origins of interaction between Russia and Germany in the field of nature use in the context of forest management in the 13<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries

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Taking into account the comparative analysis of establishment of environmental regulation of the specific state formations, the author considers the issue of mutual relations between Russia and Germany in the field of production and consumption of natural resources. Contrary to the periodization of the study of the ecological relations between the states in the second half of the 19th century, the earlier common grounds between the Russian side and the German side, related to the period of existence of the Holy Roman Empire and the Russian Empire, are in focus of attention. A number of ancient legal acts, including Russian chronicles such as the “*Russkaya Pravda*” and German local resolutions in the field of forest exploitation, are analyzed. A breach between the appearance and the borrowing of the experience in Russia is confronted. The sequence, the main stages and the nature of interstate interaction of Russia and Germany in the sphere of protection of forests and natural resources were unveiled during the research. The study concluded that the strengthening of the partnership between Russia and Germany in the field of environmental protection will have a positive impact on the Russian environmental situation. As a state with a long history of natural resource management, Germany can become a great source of experience and a model for modernization of the management of wood resources.

**Key words:** ecology, natural resource management, Waldmeister, forestry, Germany, Russia

### Introduction

In comparison with other aspects of international cooperation, such as economics and geopolitics, the history of international cooperation in the field of environmental protection has been studied relatively recently. This is due to the fact that only in the second half of the 20th century, the ecology, as a field of moral-ethical and normative-legal regulation, has undergone fundamental changes. Even in the times of the primitive communal system, in the times of ancient civilizations, followed after it, and till the period of active industrialization and urban expansion, in some states, that appeared since the 18th century, the primitive environmental

regulation had only sacral, economic, resource and geopolitical aspect on the territory of Europe and modern Russia.

The mankind followed the extensive way of society development for many centuries. An individual considered the environment as the source of resource and raw basis for implementation of necessary management. In such situation, life of the society in ancient times flowed without consideration of necessity in implementation of renewable natural resources and saving of non-renewable resources.

### Case Study

There were no clearly marked common grounds between the ancient German states and the old Russian states on the issues of natural objects for a long period of time. However, some scientists are still arguing about the theory of kinship of these ethnic groups, appealing similarity of religious and pagan beliefs, language and life. Relations on the subject of natural objects could only start because of joint management or territorial issues.

The starting point of interaction between Slavic tribes and the ancient Germans is often associated with the legendary battle of Alexander Nevsky on the Lake Peipus. The mention of the term “Germans”, related to the name of the representatives of the Germanic kingdoms, appears in the chronicles by the end of the 9th century [1. P. 3].

In its turn, the first mention of the term “Rus” on the territory of ancient Germany is contained in the “*Annales Bertiniani*” of 839 and in the Raffelstetten Customs Regulations, created between 904 and 906, is said about the trade of Russian merchants in the middle of Danube, on the territory of modern Austria [1. P. 5]. This very period of time should be considered as the beginning of the history of Russian-German international relations [2. Pp. 51–52].

At the same time, an active resettlement of representatives of German nationalities on the territory of Kievan Rus begins. This happens during the reign of Saint Olga of Kiev (945–964) in 959, after the death of Prince Igor when she returns from Constantinople to Kiev. Saint Olga of Kiev wasn't satisfied with the policy of the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire, that's why she sent an Embassy to Germany and began the establishment of relations with king Otto the Great immediately after her return. In addition to strengthening of political ties, the purpose of the delegation was to call German missionaries led by the Bishop to Russia for the baptism of the population. According to the information, the Princess was already baptized and along with the Norman name – Olga, received also a Christian name – Elena, by 959. The chronicle of Regino of Prüm (German Archbishop Adalbert) says:

“They came to king [Otto the Great], – as it turned out, in a false way – Elena's ambassadors, Queen of Russia, who was baptized in Constantinople under the Constantinople Emperor Roman, and asked to dedicate for this people the Bishop and priests” [1. P. 5].

In addition to the dignitaries of the clergy, the presence of Germans of secular classes on the territory of Kievan Rus was not uncommon. Besides the merchants interested in trade with Kiev, it was the Germans who served Russian princes, including as advisers. After the collapse of Kievan Rus, in addition to the Kiev trade turnover, trade was mainly between the merchants of Hansa and Pskov, Polotsk and Novgorod. Novgorod is notable for the fact that there is the so-called “German court” on its territory – a place where merchants lived and stored their goods.

Significant growth of the German population in Russia occurs during the reign of Ivan III and Vasily III. Even more its population increases already in the 16th century, under the reign of Ivan the Terrible. As a rule, there were foreigners under the Russian rulers, like before, as advisors and experts, who were well-versed in politics, diplomacy and military affairs. It was at this time when the “German settlements” appeared – the enclaves for living of representatives of the German Diaspora who were in Russia. Besides the representatives of the German lands, other foreigners came in such settlements. As it’s known, for many centuries the “Germans” were called people on the Russian territory, who used in their speech unknown language to the population.

However, natives of German kingdoms, at that time represented by the unification of the Holy Roman Empire, made a great contribution to the formation and development of the Russian army. They took part in its modernization, sharing not only experience, but also equipping arsenals of European weapons, engaged in design and construction of strategic military facilities, fortifications and fortresses. It is known that many Germans participated in the military campaigns of the Russian armies. Therefore, natives of the German nation of the Holy Roman Empire had stable cooperation with Russia, that tried to overcome feudal fragmentation: the Germans influenced some government’s actions, made the contribution to the development of the country’s economy, army and politics, took part in missionary and military campaigns under the auspices of the Russian state and gradually assimilated with the local people. This close cooperation shows that the basis for cooperation in all spheres of social life began to appear in Russia, including natural resource management.

If we consider the ancient legislative process in the first state forms of Russia and Germany, anyway touched upon the issue of environmental protection, it should be noted that, initially, up to the 16th century, ancient religious beliefs, primitive customs and pagan foundations of human philosophy had an enormous influence. In some fields, a man had an innocent perception of the world, identifying it with forces of nature and spirits. It is beliefs that can be attributed to the first informal environmental regulator, which had a serious impact on human behavior in relation to the environment. Both in German and Slavic tribes, the nature was central to paganism. A strong moral and ethical regulator was the belief in the influence of human interaction with nature, rituals and taboos on fate and events setting a number of restrictions in the field of natural resources, production and consumption. However, the nature of the impact on the natural environment was not critical due

to the small development of tools and technologies for mass and easy production of the necessary raw materials.

In the future, the beliefs and customs, that are rooted on the territory of the created state entities, are expressed in the first legislative acts regulating the process of natural resources, associated with the origins of property right. Some of them are mentioned only in chronicles. “*Russkaya Pravda*” by Yaroslav the Wise referred to such ancient legal acts dated the 9th–12th centuries on the territory of the Slavic nationalities and didn’t lose its relevance up to the 16th century, the Charters of the 15th–17th centuries, the Sobornoye Ulozheniye adopted in 1649 by the Zemsky Sobor. Information about a number of compiled edicts, directives and petitions has also reached the present times only in the form of chronicles. However, the common thing about them is that there were adopted acts during the reign of different rulers, that, to some extent, established the regulation of the volume and sphere of natural resources of the population. Usually, these acts were of a property and resource nature, they touched upon responsibility for abuse, theft, extraction above measure regulated the attitude towards the resources produced by hunting, fishing, beekeeping and on the territories of the land of the rulers, because these products were the basis of human life at that time [3].

In other words, the ecological management as a package of measures on regulation of relations between man and environment was seen not in the context of questions on environment’s protection, but in the context of natural resource management, and flora and fauna as a source of raw materials and the object of property relations.

The most famous decree on the territory of Kievan Rus was the decree on the Zasechnaya Cherta of Ivan the Terrible, which associated with natural objects. The idea of the so-called “Zasechnaya Cherta” dated back to the 14th–17th centuries. Zasechniye Forests, that were elevated to the status of the reserve by the decree of Ivan the Terrible, were also free from modern environmental interest. The idea of Zasechniy Heap was that some of them, which dumped their peaks to the south but not separated from the stumps of the trees and remained alive, were an invincible obstacle for the Tatar cavalry and carts. In other words, the forest, that was the protected subject of the decree of Ivan the Terrible, worked as a barricade. That’s why it was prohibited to cut it down [4. Pp. 16–20]. In such context, it is not necessary to refer the mentioned decree to the nature protection decree, which established the reserved status of the forest. This act refers to the 16th century, that in European history corresponds to the period of time of the Holy Roman Empire, which existed until 1806 and contained the territory of modern Germany. Such periodization gives grounds to look upon the events, that happened on the territory of the Empire, as the history of the formation of European environmental views.

Thus, the decree of the Salzburg’s Archbishop Eberhard II (also known as Eberhard von Regensburg) dated back to 1237 on prohibition of creation of meadows for grazing and pastures in the valley of the mining region of Gastein in order to protect the forests. Like all the regulators that existed at that time, they did not

have an ecological sense, but had a resource nature. This act of 1237 was closely connected with the mining industry and areas of growth of massifs in mountainous areas, which safety was necessary for the needs of the industry. However, the degree of effectiveness of the restrictions on wood production in the highlands is in doubt. “Pflegericht” (“Pflegericht”), which literally can be referred to as “the tutorial court” or “the tutorial management”, was created at that time in the service of the Archbishop in the 13th century for more effective management, and its officials independently appointed the so-called “Waldmeister” – a post that came into use in Russia during the reign of Peter the Great. This official was making oversight functions in the sphere of forestry, i. e. performed functions that are attributed to a forester. However, the functions of waldmeisters were greatly restricted because of the extension of the powers of the above-mentioned governing body of the Archbishop, that led to the loss of its effectiveness. The country began to feel the shortage of wood during the reign of the Archbishop Leonardo von Keiser (1495–1519). The Gastein mining and metallurgic plant reached its peak in production at that period of time. Forests suffered not only from greediness of heavy industries, but also from imperfect practice of logging, even with condition that the practice of replenishing management began to introduce under Archbishop Eberhard II – the forests were cut down not extensively, and planted again for the purpose of renewable resources. The wood material, intended for Hallein salt plant, was assigned and put on the account in accordance with a single rate, regardless of location and terms of delivery because of the differences in management prevalent at that time. Such events had a negative impact on the economy, not to mention the ecological condition of the forest [5. Pp. 108–109]. In general, it can be said that environmental regulation had a resource-saving and economic orientation on the territory of modern Germany in the Late Middle Ages. It should be noted that, in the 5th century and later, the ancient German people created their world view in relation to nature on the basis of pagan beliefs, worshiping natural forces and phenomena. Such a world view is a feature of the majority of ancient peoples of the world and carries the rudiments of human ecological consciousness [6. Pp. 7–11].

In the context of ecological development, the history of cooperation between Russia and Germany, which was part of the Holy Roman Empire up to 1806, began already under Peter the Great. Russia adopts the above-mentioned experience of forest management on the German territory, reorienting the extensive image of its management to the renewable wood resources of the state. However, the analysis of causal relationships still showed that there were no eco-centric purposes for governmental regulation, such as preservation of biodiversity and species. Any environmental activities in Germany and Russia still illustrated their tough economic and strategic principles.

The forest resources were considered as public property under Peter the Great. The expansion of military fleets and the construction of regular ships operating in the Baltic Sea have shown that the Russian Empire has weaknesses in the field of forestry. Peter the Great, in an effort to establish Russia’s status as a maritime nation,

followed the example of European monarchs and began to consider the question about forestry in Russia as one of the main matters of the state budget and as an important economic aspect as a part of a single economic mechanism. The initiatives of Peter the Great to construct the active fleet in the Baltic Sea revealed the weakest sides of forestry in Russia, when it was sometimes impossible to find suitable trees for shipbuilding purposes on such huge areas of forest land. The preservation and multiplication of tree species suitable for shipbuilding required a number of tough sanctions and penalties, followed by non-targeted cutting [7. Pp. 136–141]. Such prohibitions established both fines of 10 rubles for wood and proportionate to the damage caused to the state by cut down forest, and corporal punishment, and a number of especially mass felling was considered to be especially serious acts and was punished with death [8. P. 228].

The decree of 1703 established a seizure of forestry regardless of private or public ownership for the first time. Forest management was administered by a special office – *weltmeisterschaft* – after the formation of the Admiralty Boards and their offices [7. Pp. 136–141].

Similar model was borrowed from the experience of German forestry, which history lasted for several centuries by that time.

There appeared a post of *waldmeister* as it was in Germany, who had the functions of the forester. This post had a rank division with *Unter-* and *Oberwaldmeisters*. The so-called group of “kind people”, consisting of the Russian clerks and peasants, was also selected. They had a supporting role in regard to *waldmeisters* of different ranks. This is largely due to the fact that commonly foreigners, including immigrants from Germany, who already had experience in this sphere, became *waldmeisters*.

The control of all state forests was carried out by *oberwaldmeister*; *waldmeisters* worked at local level. *Unterwaldmeisters*, which were entrusted with supervision of 2,000–3,000 yards, went into disposal of *waldmeisters*, and “kind people” from clerks and peasants were chosen as their assistants. The system of *waldmeisters* became widespread in the Russian Empire over years. It worked in such major cities as St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Voronezh, Ryazan, Bryansk, Novgorod, Pskov and Smolensk [9].

There was a forest school in Europe, especially in Germany. Its impact on forestry in Russia was great, but it did not always correspond to its conditions and needs. The foreign specialists, who were accepted on the Russian forest service, referred to their duties not always fervently and faithfully. The German scientist K. F. Tyursher, who emigrated to Russia, wrote about his compatriots, employed on the Russian forest service, which were divided into gamekeepers without education, bringing a disgrace to the German name and the German forest science; the real experts, but not familiar and not willing to know local conditions and who believed that everything in Russia is bad, except for themselves; and the adventurers, unrecognized geniuses, who went to seek happiness in other people’s countries [10. P. 20]. A number of failures happened due to the low knowledge of foreigners about

the territoriality, natural conditions and the specifics of the economic management of local population.

These problems were admitted to be resolved not only by “kind people”, who represented the interests of local and interpreted the conditions of forest use in Russia for foreign guests, but also with special instructions and standards that began to appear in 1723. The name “Förstmeister”, which also meant a forest supervisor, who, by analogy with “kind people”, was supposed to have about six students, was used for the first time on the territory of the Russian Empire in one of the accompanying acts [11. P. 131].

Later, the idea of forestry developed under Anna Ioannovna, “The Regulation of the Plant and the Seeding of Forests for the Pleasure of Her Imperial Majesty Fleet” appeared in 1732.

The German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt was the author of the term “nature monument” in 1799, which was applied in regard to the highest mimosa in Venezuela [12. S. 746]. This event can be connected with a breakthrough in the study of the biosphere. The German scientists for the first time considered the natural object not as an object of fuel and construction consumption, but as a moral and ethical value. A large part of natural monuments began to appear on the territory of Russia already in 20th century.

### Conclusion

The detailed study of the history of natural resource management in Russia and Germany makes it possible to identify the reasons for the existence of a modern environmental organization in these states. The close partnership between Russia and Germany in the environmental sphere actively continues to develop, despite the end of the year of ecology, announced in 2017. This cooperation can be characterized as productive, and the experience of the German state is useful, because Germany historically had a leading role in the field of environmental development in comparison with Russia. Russia’s focus on strengthening the international cooperation with Germany and borrowing the best practices on protection of natural objects will lead to stabilization and improvement of the environmental situation in the country.

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## **Истоки взаимодействия России и Германии в области природопользования на примере лесного хозяйствования в XIII–XVIII вв.**

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Автор подходит к вопросу взаимоотношений России и Германии в сфере добычи и потребления природных ресурсов исходя из сравнительного анализа становления экологического регулирования в данных государственных образованиях. Вопреки принятой периодизации устоявшегося экологического взаимоотношения государств во второй половине XIX в. в фокусе внимания находятся более ранние точки соприкосновения рос-

сийской и германской стороны, относящиеся еще к периоду существования Священной Римской и Российских империй. Рассмотрен ряд древних правовых актов, включая летописные российские, такие, как «Русская права» и немецкие локальные постановления в сфере регулирования лесопользования. Сопоставлен разрыв между появлением и заимствованием опыта на территории России. В ходе данного исследования были выявлены последовательность, основные этапы и характер межгосударственного взаимодействия России и Германии в сфере охраны лесов и природопользования. По итогам исследования сделан вывод о том, что укрепление партнерства России и Германии в сфере охраны окружающей среды позитивно отразится на российской экологической обстановке.

**Ключевые слова:** экология, природопользование, вельдмайстер, лесное хозяйство, Германия, Россия

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