

## Economy in the Territory of Latvia in the Iron Age 1–1 200 AD

Craft production was increasingly concentrated in the hands of specialist craftsmen – blacksmiths [40]\*, jewellers [41], carpenters [45], etc. The economy was still based mainly on agriculture and stock-keeping [42,43]. The three-field system was gradually introduced, and grain was ground in the rotary quern [48], which superseded the use of grinding stones in around the 11th century.

Forest beekeeping was important, because wax was one of the main exports [44]. The role of hunting and fishing had declined.

Weaving remained as a home craft, although there are indications of the activities of professional weavers [47]. Around the 13th century, the vertical loom was replaced by the horizontal loom. The potter's wheel, introduced around the turn of the 11th century, came into widespread use.

Trade became a separate profession, as indicated by finds of scales and weights as grave goods. International trade played an important role at this time. The area of present-day Latvia formed part of a network of trade routes connecting northern Europe with areas to the south-east. The runestones tell of Scandinavian trading and military activities in the lands of the Couronians, Semigallians and Livs [49]. Trade and other economic activities led to the accumulation of considerable riches, as attested by the deposits [52,53]. The leading centre of trade at this time was Daugmale [55,56], on the lower Daugava.

In the 5th–10th century, people lived mainly in open, unprotected settlement sites. District centres had hill-forts with defences, serving as refuges in times of danger. Only some hill-forts were permanently inhabited. In addition to hill-forts and open settlements, the Latgallians had a special kind of residential site: the lake dwellings [59]. These were fortified residential sites, built for defensive purposes on log platforms on islands and shallows in lakes.

\* *The numbers in square brackets indicate the relevant showcases.*