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Handel, Geld und Politik

GEDENKSCHRIFT ZU EHREN VON PROF. DR. ROLF HAMMEL-KIESOW

CHAPTER 1

The Early Hanses*

Rolf Hammel-Kiesow

Introduction

Over the last five decades, the scholarly picture of the Hanse's pre- and early history has changed considerably.[1] Not only is this true of the original homeland of these Lower German merchants, between the Lower Rhine and Elbe Rivers, where settlement archaeology has unearthed new time-depth dimensions of economic development,[2] but also of the Baltic Region, which has been the primary focus of this change. Sixty years ago, German historians who had been reluctant to acknowledge "older approaches regarding city life on the Baltic's south coast" before the arrival of Lower German merchants as 'culture bearers'[3] began for the first time to revise the existing historical construct of

* Translated by Lore Schultheiss.

1 An overview of the early Hanseatic history until the mid fourteenth century is found in: Philippe Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, with a contribution, "Zur hansischen Geschichtsforschung 1960–1997" by the same and Antjekathrin Graßmann (Stuttgart: Kröner 5. expanded edition, 1998), 17–88, 488–493; Johannes Schildhauer and Konrad Fritze and Walter Stark, *Die Hanse* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1974), 11–111; Heinz Stoob, *Die Hanse* (Graz et al.: Styria, 1995), 18–165; the section "Von den 'Hansen' zur Hanse" (1150–1300/50) with contributions by Erich Hoffmann, Volker Henn and Derek Keene, in Jörgen Bracker, ed., *Die Hanse—Lebenswirklichkeit und Mythos*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, 1989), 29–49 (4. improved edition of the text volume ed. Jörgen Bracker and Volker Henn and Rainer Postel, Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 2006); Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, Die Hanse [C.H. Beck Wissen 2131] (München: Beck 5. newly revised edition. 2014), 21–64; Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, Matthias Puhle and Siegfried Wittenburg, *Die Hanse* (Darmstadt: Primus-Verlag 2009), 8–52, 110–126; Gisela Graichen and Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, *Die deutsche Hanse. Eine heimliche Supermacht* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt 2011), 13–105; Stephan Selzer, *Die mittelalterliche Hanse* [Geschichte kompakt] (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2010), 13–43; Carsten Jahnke, Die Hanse [Reclam Sachbuch; Reclams Universal-Bibliothek Nr. 19206] (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun. 2014), 25–50, 132–161.

2 For example: Gabriele Isenberg, "Soest, ein frühes Wirtschaftszentrum (1.–12. Jahrhundert n. Chr.)", *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission* 83 (2002), 265–281.

3 Fritz Rörig, "Das Meer und das europäische Mittelalter," in idem *Wirtschaftskräfte im Mittelalter. Abhandlungen zur Stadt- und Hansegeschichte*, ed. Paul Kaegbein (Cologne: Hermann Böhlaus Nachf, 1971; first published 1951), 647.

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the Baltic southern coast as "in large measure dead"[4] prior to the Germans' arrival. While some still held to this idea into the 1950s, more recent settlement archaeology and numismatic examination, as well as fresh interpretations of written sources based upon a new line of questioning, have created a new picture of the south Baltic coast as a multi-facetted cultural and economic landscape. Settlement archeology determines or specifies the location, origin, duration of settlement and habitation of early (sixth-tenth centuries) and medieval (eleventh-twelfth centuries) trading centers. The evaluation of discovered coinage provides hypotheses that help to plausibly reconstruct the dynamics of the economic relations in the region between Western Europe and Northwest Russia.[5]

The integration of the Baltic Region into Western and Central Europe beginning in the eleventh century is now the object of interdisciplinary and international research, in which the recent view of the 'discovered,' 'conquered,' and 'Christianized' people, namely the indigenous population of the areas surrounding the Baltic Sea, is presented from a different perspective under the term 'Europeanization'.[6] In Hanseatic research before World War II, long-range merchants from Lower Germany, and in their wake the nobility, farmers, and craftsmen, were the primary players in the incorporation of the Northeast Baltic region into Western and Central European culture. However, new approaches examine the entire Baltic Region, with one example being the investigation of power-politics in the Nordic Kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden and their role, as well as the Catholic Church's role, in the mission to the southern and eastern Baltic Regions.[7] Researchers classify the integration

4 Fritz Rörig, *Die Entstehung der Hanse und der Ostseeraum* (Cologne: Hermann Böhlaus Nachf., 1971; first published 1951/52), 564.

5 Christian Radtke, "Schleswig im vorlübischen Geld- und Warenverkehr zwischen westlichem Kontinent und Ostseeraum," in *Haithabu und die frühe Stadtentwicklung im nördlichen Europa*, ed. Klaus Brandt, Michael Müller-Wille and Christian Radtke, Schriften des Archäologischen Landesmuseums, vol. 8 (Neumünster: Wachholtz-Verlag, 2002), 379–429.

6 Nils Blomkvist, *The Discovery of the Baltic: The Reception of a Catholic World-System in the European North* (AD 1075–1225), The Northern World, vol. 15 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005).

7 Philip Line, *Kingship and State Formation in Sweden 1130–1290*, The Northern World, vol. 27 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007); William Urban, *The Baltic Crusade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ^{2}1994); Alan V. Murray, ed., *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier 1150–1500* (Aldershot et al.: Ashgate, 2001); Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes and the Baltic Crusades 1147–1254*, The Northern World, vol. 26 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007); Thomas Lindkvist, "Crusades and Crusading Ideology in the Political History of Sweden, 1140–1500," in Alan V. Murray, ed., *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier 1150–1500* (Aldershot et al.: Ashgate, 2001), 119–130.

of the Baltic Region into the Christian occidental world not as a singular process, but as part of a European expansion that included Central Eastern Europe, the Iberian Peninsula and the British Isles.[8] The most comprehensive approach of the last few years characterizes the process as the integration of the peripheral Baltic Region into a "Catholic world system," in the sense of Braudel and Wallerstein.[9]

The Baltic Region: From the Turn of the First Millennium to the Beginning of the Twelfth Century

As early as Roman times, both metals and slaves from the forests of northern and northeastern Europe were highly sought after in both southern and western Europe. As time went on, the demand for these goods grew steadily, both in the Frankish Empire and in the Muslim territories surrounding the Mediterranean. In the Carolingian period, an additional demand for northern furs developed as well. According to archeological sources, the direct trade routes of Baltic merchants shifted during the late ninth century, and began to pass through the Russian river system to Byzantium and from there into the Caliphate.

However, the Scandinavians (Vikings) did not initiate the shift; instead, the trade route's foundation had been laid by the Arabs and Khazars. Nevertheless, a Scandinavian slave trade directed towards the southeast, which lasted for about a century, facilitated the arrival of an estimated 50–100 million Dirhem (Arabic silver coins) in the Baltic Region.[10] These Dirhem served as the currency in a 'weight-money' economy that extended from Iceland and Ireland in the west to Scandinavia, the Baltic States, and well into Russia in the east. Furthermore, this economy, by virtue of the Dirhem, was at least temporarily tied to the currency relations of the Caliphate. With the Dirhem as a key

8 This approach was already basis for the Reichenau lectures 1970–1972; see Walter Schlesinger, ed., *Die deutsche Ostsiedlung des Mittelalters als Problem der europäischen Geschichte*, Vorträge und Forschungen, vol. 18 (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke-Verlag, 1975); Charles Higounet, *Die Deutsche Ostsiedlung im Mittelalter* (Berlin: Siedler, 1986); French edition, *Les Allemands en Europe centrale et orientale au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Aubier, 1989).

9 Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 35–95.

10 Ralf Wiechmann, "Der Wandel des Währungssystems bei den Elb- und Ostseeslawen. Zur ältesten Münzprägung in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern," in *Geld und Kredit in der Geschichte Norddeutschlands*, ed. Klaus-Joachim Lorenzen-Schmidt, Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Schleswig-Holsteins, Bd. 43 (Neumünster: Wachholtz-Verlag, 2006), 43–68, 44.

component, the weight-money system facilitated trade in this expansive economic area as a mode of standard currency.[11]

What has yet to be determined is why the influx of silver had already slowed by the 940's and then ended around 970. It seems more than certain that there were a number of reasons, among them the decreased production of silver from mines in western Asia and the collapse of Samanid rule (873–999) in Chorosan and Transoxania (south and southeast of the Aral Sea).[12] Furthermore, the success of a Christian Mission in Sweden and Norway may have significantly affected trade between the Baltic and the southeast due to the Catholic Church's prohibition of the slave trade. In response, merchants in the Baltic Region once again oriented themselves towards the west. Meanwhile, new silver deposits had been discovered in the Hartz Mountains, the Black Forest, and in the Vosges which now enabled the buyers of central and Western Europe to deliver the coveted precious metal.[13] Thus the initial development of the trading system into which the early Hanses[14] were integrated can be traced to about the turn of the first millennium A.D.

During the eleventh century, the transport routes along the Baltic coast were ruled by the traditional kingdoms of the north, namely Denmark and the Svear Empire, as well as by the princes of the Kievan Rus and by their tributary princes in Novgorod. In addition, the Polish Kingdom was actively engaged in

11 Wiechmann, "Wandel des Währungssystems," 50f.

12 Newest overview of research on money circulation in the Baltic region during the time of the Vikings until the end of the eleventh century Hendrik Mäkeler, "Wikingerzeitlicher Geldumlauf im Ostseeraum. Neue Perspektiven," *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae X* (2005), 121–149.

13 Heiko Steuer, "Münzprägung, Silberströme und Bergbau um das Jahr 1000 in Europa—wirtschaftlicher Aufbruch und technische Innovation," *Aufbruch ins zweite Jahrtausend. Innovation und Kontinuität in der Mitte des Mittelalters*, ed. Achim Hubel and Bernd Schneidmüller, Mittelalter-Forschungen, Bd. 16 (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke-Verlag, 2004), 117–149.

14 Strictly speaking, one should speak of the Hanse not before 1358, although the term is already used to refer to groups of Low German merchants previously. With regard to trade in Northeast, North and Northwest Europe, viewing Low German long-distance traders and the councils of the cities from which they derive with their common interests as developping the Hanse under the specific circumstances of the mid-14th century should be avoided. But to be short and concise, we use the term "early Hanse" to express that the more institutionalized form of "stede van der dudeschen hense" developed from these beginnings. The essential characteristics and especially their purpose and privileges based on foreign trade were already present in the 13th century. For joint actions of the early Hanseatic merchants and cities in the 13th century, I use as a collective term "*gemene kopman*" or "*gemene stede*" even if these terms were not used until the 14th century.

Baltic politics until the death of Boleslav III Schiefmund (died 1138).[15] The role played by the western Slavic areas as well as by the inhabitants of Courland on the Baltic south coast is unknown due to the cultural lack of a writing system. Western and central European merchants who wished to participate in the profitable eastern trade in this region were obliged to do so in accordance with the dictates of the rulers or functioning elites of these Baltic abutters.

The trade goods of the Baltic Region must have been profitable, as millions of western and central European coins reached the hands of merchants and rulers in this area starting at the beginning of the tenth century. Trade routes can be reconstructed by looking to the origin of these coins. Additionally, the manner in which they were handled provides clues regarding the various economic zones and their changes over time.

Based on such evidence, one can distinguish three distinct Baltic trade routes in use during the eleventh century:[16] the first targeted Danish and Swedish territories. In these areas, coins from Cologne and the Frankish realms arrived by boat via the Rhine River and North Sea. The second trading route led to the Baltic States and the land of Novgorod. In these areas, Frisian coins, which also arrived by sea, comprised the majority of the hoards. This second route, this sea route, may have been the northern route, the Route of Kings, which primarily connected the Malar region with Ladoga. It ran along the eastern Swedish coast, at the latitude of the Aland Islands, then along the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland to the Neva River and from there into Russia.[17] Thirdly, in the western Slavic region, comprising the southern coast of the Baltic Sea to the Vistula River, domestic coins circulated in company with Italian ones.[18] It was primarily the Lower Saxon merchants who went to the trading centers of the Baltic's southern coast by way of land. Yet this area could also be reached by sea via the route described by Adam of Bremen, which ran along the southern Baltic coast from either Schleswig or Oldenburg to Jumne

15 Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 328; regarding Poland's role in the process of 'Europeanization' of the Baltic region, see: Roman Czaja, Marian Dygo, Sławomir Gawlas, Grzegorz Myśliwski, Krzysztof Ożóg, *Ziemie polskie wobec Zachodu. Studia nad rozwojem średniowiecznej Europy* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo-DiG, 2006) [engl. summary: The Polish Lands versus the West. Studies on the Development of Mediaeval Europe], 429–447.

16 Ralf Wiechmann, *Edelmetalldepots der Wikingerzeit in Schleswig-Holstein. Vom "Ringbrecher" zur Münzwirtschaft*, Offa-Bücher, vol. 77 (Neumünster: Wachholtz-Verlag, 1996), 81–83, 101f.

17 Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 290–295, with map 294.

18 Mäkeler, "Wikingerzeitlicher Geldumlauf," [bei Anm. 47].

(Wolin) and on to Novgorod.[19] The most westerly region of the western Slavic realm, Wagria, where Old Lübeck was situated, seems to have been the intermediate zone; attainable both by land and by sea.

The distribution of coins reveals two economic regions.[20] The first was a continuous area formed by southern Sweden and its south Baltic neighbors, but also comprising Denmark and Poland. This area supported an intensive trade and market exchange that required small 'coins' (below penny size) for local trade. This is indicated by the high fragmentation rate of discovered coins, as well as by the numerous probing marks created in order to verify silver content. The second economic area comprised Gotland, the Baltic States, and Russia. In Russia, a great number of discovered hoards have been dominated by Frisian coins that undoubtedly came there by direct exchange. It appears that this second area continued the traditions of Viking period trade. Eleventh century rune stones from the Malar area prove close trading relations with Novgorod. In the late eleventh century, St. Olaf's Church was erected in Novgorod, and the western trade seems certain to have taken place by means of the so-called Frisian Guild in Sigtuna (ca. 1070). This guild probably did not consist of Frisians, but rather Swedish merchants specializing in the trade with Friesland.[21] The western Baltic Region, including Poland, on the other hand, seems to have developed another, 'more modern', structure aimed at market exchange.

According to one highly plausible theory, the number of hoards in a region is directly proportional to the power of the ruler in a respective region to set exchange controls. On one end of the scale, a large number of hoards containing a supra-regional mix of coins would indicate missing coinage. At the other end of the scale, a near complete lack of hoards containing only regional coins of a single type indicates an area of strictly monitored coinage.[22] The origin of coinage in Denmark, Sweden and in the Principality of Novgorod around the turn of the millennium was the earliest indicator for the advance of a western/central European coin-based economy. However, the princes of Svear and Novgorod abandoned coinage again approximately half a century later. In this

19 *Magistri Adam Bremensis Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae Pontificum* ed. Werner Trillmich and Rudolf Buchner, Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der Hamburger Kirche und des Reiches Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, Bd. XI (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, ^{5}1978), II, c. 22.

20 Radtke, "Schleswig," 382–384.

21 Regarding Novgorod Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 396; regarding Sigtuna Radtke, "Schleswig," 391.

22 K. Johnsson, "Coin circulation and the pattern of hoarding in the Viking Age and Middle Ages," *XII. Internationaler Numismatischer Kongress Berlin 1997*, 911–916, 916.

new era of regionalized coinage in the Baltic, only Denmark continued to make its own coins by the turn of the twelfth century. However, western Slavic rulers also began to make their own coins around same time.[23] The many hoards from this time found in the northern and eastern regions point to a diminished control over money circulation. Meanwhile, the dearth of hoard findings from the same period, as well as the coinage of silver Agrippiner in Old Lübeck and the copper coins of Mecklenburg, indicate strong control by the rulers.[24] This constitutes a single piece in a mosaic depicting the development of strong western Slavic-Abotritish power in the period commencing with the culmination of the eleventh century; additional pieces will be discussed below.

The most important emporium for the trade between the Baltic and West/Central Europe was the City of Schleswig. It was here that the coins brought from the west were converted into the weight-money economy of the Baltic Region.[25] German merchants who were interested in Baltic trade, especially the Saxons, Westphalians, Frisians, and merchants from the Lower Rhine, also traveled to the fairs and market of this City on the River Schlei. Many of them even settled there. As early as 974, and following the conquest of Haithabu by Emperor Otto II, a *colonia Saxonum* complete with warriors, merchants and craftsmen was established, and by about 1080, the chronicler, Adam von Bremen, dubbed the city on the River Schlei *civitas Saxonum*.[26] Presumably the Frisians were the most important group of established merchants in the empire and must have had a powerful position in the city. This seems likely given the confidence King Niels of Denmark placed in them at the beginning of the twelfth century when he trusted his security to their exclusive protection (*Fresonum presidio*). Furthermore, the twelfth-century charter for the City of Schleswig granted merchants from Saxony and Friesland (*hospes de ducatu Saxoniae* or *hospes de Frisia*) significant advantages over other strangers.[27]

Throughout the twelfth century, the transit route from the North Sea to the Baltic Sea located between Hollingstedt and Schleswig was clearly most

23 Only mention in the written record for the year 1114 for the Zirzipanese in eastern Mecklenburg in the *Annales corbeienses*, MGH SS III, 8; regarding coin findings—partially even from the mid eleventh century—and their numismatic valuation Wiechmann, "Wandel des Währungssystems," 55–68.

24 Silver coating still sometimes found on some of the copper coins could also indicate counterfeiting; Wiechmann, "Der Wandel des Währungssystems," 65–68. Mäkeler, "Wikingerzeitlicher Geldumlauf," [near note 102].

25 Radtke, "Schleswig," 387f.

26 *Adam, Gesta Pontificum*, I, c. 57, 228/229; Schol. 81 (82), 392–393.

27 Schleswiger STR § 29; Erik Kroman and Peter Jørgensen, ed., *Danmarks gamle Købstadslovgivning, vol. 1 Sønderjylland* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1951), 3–17.

important in accommodating traffic between west/central Europe and the Baltic.[28] The cathedrals in Ribe and Schleswig as well as numerous other churches in Jutland dating from 1120–1260, all of which were constructed using tuff (tufa) from the Rhine region, are proof of the very pronounced South-North trade. Written, architectural, and archeological sources demonstrate close trade relations between the Rhineland (especially Cologne) and Schleswig. These commercial relations reached as far as Southern France in the west and more than likely extended beyond Schleswig in the east. Beyond its geographically advantageous location in the center of trade, the metamorphosis of Schleswig into a clerical and royal center during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries further exemplifies the importance of the City on the River Schlei.[29]

On the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea, we have definitive proof that Saxons settled in the important Slavic trade centers of Wolin and Stettin in the time of Adam of Bremen (mid-eleventh century) and in the time of the missionary, Otto of Bamberg (early twelfth century). Indirectly, we can also demonstrate Saxon settlement in Old Lübeck.[30]

During the very lifetime of the chronicler from Bremen, Western Europeans began to become more and more interested in the Baltic; Adam's interest in the unknown countries of the North is the first proof of that. Since Adam reports that ships constantly left the port of Schleswig in order to sail to the lands of the Slavs, Sweden, Samland, and Greece (meaning Novgorod in Northwestern Russia), it is most probable that he received his information about the Slavic Regions from merchants.[31]

Beginning with the last quarter of the eleventh century, economic development in the Baltic Region appears to have accelerated; a trend that is consistent with what was happening in both western and central Europe. Indicators of this acceleration include the expansion of Schleswig (especially its port), and

28 Klaus Brandt, ed., *Hollingstedt an der Treene: Ein Flusshafen der Wikingerzeit und des Mittelalters für den Transitverkehr zwischen Nord- und Ostsee* (Neumünster: Wachholtz 2012).

29 A new valuation of the importance of Schleswig, also during most of the thirteenth century, is made by Carsten Jahnke, "... und er verwandelte die blühende Handelsstadt in ein unbedeutendes Dorf." "Die Rolle Schleswigs im internationalen Handel des 13. Jahrhunderts," in Gerhard Fouquet, Mareike Hansen, Carsten Jahnke and Jan Schlürmann, ed., *Von Menschen, Ländern, Meeren. Festschrift für Thomas Riis zum 65. Geburtstag* (Tönning et al.: Der andere Verlag, 2006), 225–268.

30 Lech Leciejewicz, "Sachsen in den slawischen Ostseestädten im 10.–12. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für Archäologie* 21 (1987), 75–81.

31 Adam, Gesta Pontificum, IV, 1, p. 434. Regarding the Slavic areas ibid. II, 21, 22.

the establishment of a merchant settlement near Old Lübeck, which was, with the exception of Prague, the first castle-town in the Slavic Region permanently inhabited by long distance traders.[32] To the obvious detriment of nearby Wolin (Vineta/Jumne/Jomsburg), Stettin (on the Oder) developed into an important commercial center along the Oder River. Meanwhile, trade relationships on the Baltic Region grew stronger. From about the turn of the twelfth century, one notices a distinct Russian influence on the churches of Gotland, an island whose population had voluntarily converted to Christianity during the eleventh century when returning merchants brought along Christian priests.[33] Additionally, marriages between Swedish, Danish, Polish and Russian ruling families demonstrate close dynastic and more than likely commerce-related connections. For example, Prince Mistislaw Vladimirovich, or King Harald of Novgorod in Nordic sources, married the daughter of the Swedish King, Inge I and in turn their daughter, Ingeborg, was married to Knut Lavard, who reigned as both Jarl of Schleswig and, for a short time, King of the Abotrites (d. 1131). According to the Knytlinga Saga, which dates from the second half of the thirteenth century, their son, Waldemar I of Denmark (b. 1131; r. 1157, d. 1182), was supposedly born in Russia and spent his early childhood in Novgorod.[34]

Trade, Mission and Conquest: The Baltic Region in the Twelfth Century

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it is impossible for the historian to distinguish between the missions and the commerce of the Baltic Region. However, it is possible to identify three distinct groups that inserted themselves into this complicated arrangement. These groups were the Roman Church, the merchants (primarily Lower German), and the nobility. Beginning in the early twelfth century, the attention of German princes was increasingly drawn to the Baltic Region. Lothar of Supplingenburg, who was proclaimed Duke of the Saxons in 1106, directed his political influence towards the northern Slavic lands, in particular, against the Ruganer and the continental Ranes. Lothar considered Denmark not only a country merely bordering the empire, but also an important political power worthy of consideration

32 Ernst Pitz, *Europäisches Städtewesen und Bürgertum. Von der Spätantike bis zum hohen Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), 241.

33 Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 385–390.

34 Anti Selart, *Livland und die Rus im 13. Jahrhundert*, Quellen und Studien zur baltischen Geschichte, vol. 21 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007), 34.

within the context of his own political initiatives, which, in their entirety, reached as far as the Baltic coast. Thus began an era of battles for dominion over the southwest Baltic coast and eventually over the entire Baltic Region. Descriptions of these events, which primarily emanated from the accounts of the German Chroniclers, including Otto of Bamberg,[35] Helmold of Bosau,[36] Arnold of Lübeck,[37] and Henry of Latvia,[38] as well as the account of the Dane Saxo Grammaticus,[39] seem to depict the actual processes and power struggles of this era in a distorted manner given the complete absence of a consideration for operations of power politics and for commercial issues within these accounts. For instance, an expansion of the western Slavs could be rendered plausible by the following archaeological evidence. The western Slavs erected the fortified trading post, Bulverket in Tingstaede Traesk (Sea), on Gotland in 1133, and then settled near Riga in the Duna-Delta. Blomkvist even speaks (in a slightly provocative fashion) of a "Slavic Hanse."[40] Furthermore, the proliferation of Slavic ceramics, ceramics dominant on the Danish Islands (Eastern Denmark including Southern Sweden, Oeland, and Gotland) between the first half of the eleventh century and about 1200, demonstrates a strong cultural influence that developed as a result of Slavic migrations through these areas.[41] Written sources attest to Slavic settlement in Danish towns; such settlement facilitated a permanent pipeline for the supply of goods originating from the Slavic homeland on the southern Baltic coast. These goods, in particular furs, wax, and honey, were in turn used by the Danes to satisfy the demands

35 *Die Heiligenleben des Bischofs Otto von Bamberg*, in Lorenz Weinrich, ed., *Vitae sanctorum episcoporum Adalberti Pragensis et Ottonis Babenbergensis Historiam Germanicam et Slavicam illustrantes*, Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, vol. 25 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), 120–493.

36 Helmold von Bosau, *Slawenchronik*, newly transcribed and explained by Heinz Stoob, Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, vol. 19 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973).

37 Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz and Johann Martin Lappenberg, MGH SS rer. Germ. 14 (Hannover: Hahn, 1868, new edition 1978).

38 *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae*, ed. Von L. Arbusow and A. Bauer (Heinrich von Lettland, Livländische Chronik, newly translated by Albert Bauer), Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, vol. 24 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975).

39 *Saxo Grammaticus. Gesta Danorum. Danmarkshistorien*, eds. Karsten Friis-Jensen and Peter Zeeberg, vol. 1–2 (Copenhagen: Det Danske Sprog—og Litteraturselskap, 2005).

40 Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 322–324.

41 Mats Roslund, *Guests in the House. Cultural Transmission between Slavs and Scandinavians 900 to 1300 A.D.*, The Northern World, vol. 33 (Leiden et al.: Brill, 2007), 472–530.

of German merchants.[42] During the time of Henry of Old Lübeck (1095–1127), who had more than likely been crowned King of the Abotrites by Lothar III (though the traditional account is ambiguous), the western Slavs were probably a considerable factor in the power structure of the region. This suspicion is affirmed by the afore-mentioned coinage, produced during this time period, as well as by the sheer size of the Slavic fleets. According to Snorri Sturluson, Ratibor's fleet supposedly comprised 300 ships in the year 1136. By the assessment of additional sources, the fleet of Prince Boguslaw of Pomerania boasted as many as 500 ships in 1184.[43]

Following the death of Henry of Old Lübeck, Lothar III appointed Jarl Knut Lavard (the Dane) King of the Abotrites. Jarl Knut was, of course, married to the Novgorod Princess Ingeborg and as result of his elevation and by virtue of his marriage, became ruler of the southwest Baltic coastline, including the key trading centers of Schleswig and Old Lübeck, and more than likely controlled or at least had designs upon the domination of the east-west seaborne trading route to Novgorod. It is in this context that the Knytlinga Saga of the late thirteenth century provides another fascinating clue.

In the saga, Knut's marriage is attributed to his contact with a merchant from Sambia, who suggested to Knut the advantages offered by the trade with the Baltic States and Russia itself in such a manner that Knut is thought to have established additional contacts to these areas by means of his marriage to the Novgorod Princess. In the saga, the new seaborne trading route, the Austerwegr, may have been used as basis for the saga's poetic narration. It crossed the open waters of the Baltic Sea from Gotland and led on from Northern Courland either into the Gulf of Finland or into the mouth of the Duna River, taking the place of the "older route of the Kings."[44] Unfortunately, Knut Lavard was murdered in 1133. However, this murder was not exclusively the product of internecine quarrels and jealousy within the Danish Dynasty. It had much to do with Knut's involvement in disputes regarding the dominion of the Baltic Region.

These disputes involved two coalitions. One comprised Knut Lavard and Novgorod, and was opposed by the other, which included the Kings of Poland and Svear as well as the Prince of the Kievan Rus. In the wake of Knut's death, Lothar III himself took control of the coastal region. There he erected the

42 Radtke, "Schleswig," 409f.

43 Lech Leciejewicz, "Maritime activities of the Western Slavs in the Early Middle Ages," in Vytautas Kazakevičius and Vladas Žulkus, ed., *The Balts and their Neighbours in the Viking Age*, Archaelogia Baltica vol. 2 (Vilnius: Zara, 1997), 95–104, 101.

44 Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 401f.

Segeberg Castle and in 1134, presumably from his court in Halberstadt, awarded certain privileges to the Gotlanders residing within his sphere of influence. In this, the western Slavs did not fail to recognize the danger that threatened their political and cultural independence. In his chronicle, Helmold of Bosau meticulously and precisely analyzes the situation associated with the erection of Segeberg Castle from the perspective of a Slavic Prince.[45] What is more, the Slavs razed Old Lübeck almost immediately after the death of Lothar in 1138. Obviously, the Slavs had seen a center for German influence in the presence of this castle settlement. However, by destroying the old settlement, they had paved the way for the establishment of the Lower German city of Lübeck, which received its charter only a short time later in the year 1143.

We can place the origin of early Hanseatic history within this era while remaining fully aware that the era was actually a continuum comprising three distinct turning points: the first taking place around 970/1000, the second around 1075, and the third and final turning point between 1120 and 1150. However, the direct influence of Lothar on the southwestern Baltic was only one of several events through which the cards in the Baltic Region were dealt anew at that time. In the period between 1120 and 1140, Gotland (primarily) separated from the Empire of the Svear, opened its doors to foreign merchants from the West and South (previously, only Russian merchants seem to have played any role as guests), and developed into a central emporium for the trade between East and West that maintained its importance for the next 150 years. Meanwhile, Novgorod also split off from the Kievan Rus and became a Boyar Republic under an elected prince. However, Novgorod's separation from the Kievan Rus resulted in the loss of its trade relations with Byzantium. This development not only affected Novgorod itself, but also Birka/Sigtuna.[46] Ultimately, the three regions central to Baltic trade, including the southwestern coastal areas that had come under German influence, the Island of Gotland that had become a trans-shipment and trading center, and the 'Republic' of Novgorod, which was centrally located for trade with Russia, became conjoined during the 1130s. This development would come to shape the history of the Baltic Region for the next 150 years.

During this period, the Low German merchant settlement of Lübeck received a city charter, and for the first time introduced a model for the western European communal town into the Baltic coast. By adopting the name Liubice (Middle Low German Lubike), the new inhabitants of that settlement proclaimed the continuation of the ruined Slavic castle town's

45 Helmold, *Slawenchronik*, c. 53.

46 Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 392–400.

tradition of trade.[47] Greater legal security for Lower German merchants, a shorter route to the Baltic Sea in comparison with the route via Schleswig for western Westphalian and Lower Saxon merchants, and direct access to salt and herring served as the foundation for the rise of Lübeck. As for the land connection to Hamburg, which would later become so important to the Hanseatic trade, it seems only to have become economically significant during the first decades of the thirteenth century after both cities succeeded in securing increasingly bigger shares of the traffic that had previously taken place via Schleswig and the sea.[48]

As early as 1143, Lübeck had become a center for transshipment of herring and salt. In addition, Lübeck served as a hub for the sea to land and land to sea transport of Baltic trade goods headed to the south and southwest. Many of the merchants interested in the Baltic trade and the herring catch, who until then had been residents of Bardowiek, relocated to the better-situated city of Lübeck. Due to a decrease in his revenues from Bardowiek, Henry the Lion then intervened to take possession of Lübeck. In 1159, he had the recently burned city rebuilt. The rise of Lübeck only coincided with the rule of the Saxon duke, but its increasing importance made Henry the Lion interested in the new city in the first place. However, the city's ascent was very slow, primarily because the Low German merchants lacked ships! In response, the merchants of Lübeck reacted to this situation in 1159 when they requested that their new overlord, Henry the Lion, "send messengers into the main towns and kingdoms of the North, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Russia, and [...] [offer] them peace [and] access to free trade in his city, Lübeck."[49] Among other things, this meant an exemption from duties for the Russians, Normans,

47 Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, "Neue Aspekte zur Geschichte Lübecks: von der Jahrtausendwende bis zum Ende der Hansezeit. Die Lübecker Stadtgeschichtsforschung der letzten zehn Jahre (1988–1997). Teil 1: bis zum Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts," *ZVLGA* 78 (1998), 47–114, 61–65; Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, "Die Anfänge Lübecks: Von der abotritischen Landnahme bis zur Eingliederung in die Grafschaft Holstein-Stormarn," in Antjekathrin Graßmann, ed., *Lübeckische Geschichte*, 4th ed., (Lübeck: Verlag Schmidt-Römhild, 2008), 38–45.

48 Carsten Jahnke, "Handelsstrukturen im Ostseeraum im 12. und beginnenden 13. Jahrhundert. Ansätze einer Neubewertung," *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 126 (2008), 167–168. Carsten Jahnke, "The City of Lübeck and the Internationality of Early Hanseatic Trade," in JustynaWubs-Mrozewicz and Stuart Jenks, eds., *The Hanse in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (The Northern World. North Europe and the Baltic c. 400–1700 A.H. Peoples, Economies and Cultures, Vol. 60). (Leiden: Brill 2013), 37–58.—Single merchants from Lübecker, of course, appeared earlier already, like 1187 in Hamburg-Neustadt, *Arnoldi, Chronica, Slavorum* III, c. 20, 110.

49 Helmold, *Slawenchronik*, c. 86.

Swedes, Ölandians, Goths, Livs and all the peoples of the East. This exemption was still documented in the first charter of municipal law drawn up between 1226 and 1234.[50] By employing these free trade policies with regard to their Baltic neighbors, it is possible that they were already trying to compete with the more prominent center of transshipment in Schleswig to divert larger shares of goods to Lübeck than ever before. It was in this manner that they attempted to draw sufficient tonnage to the city on the Trave from the seafaring merchants of the Baltic region.[51] The common, or mutual, trading organization of the *gilda communis* comprised of Gutnish and Low German merchants presumably developed from this cooperation; this will be discussed later in more detail. The great town seal of Lübeck is reminiscent of this era of joint trade. There is an intensive discussion what type of ship the seal depicts. Most likely it is a hybrid type that combined elements of the early cogs as well as of Scandinavian ships.[52] The seal may depict the helmsman, or the *stýrimaðr* of Nordic sources. The helmsman was often the ship's owner and responsible for granting the merchant admission to the board community. In the seal, this is attested by the helmsman's outstretched right arm. Under the treaty, the merchant was granted protection and security through the *stýrimaðr*, ensuring that both could form a trading company.[53] Thus, the seal image presumably mirrors the state of trade in the city of Lübeck in the first centuries of its existence.

50 UBStL 1, no. 32.

51 These 'free trade politics' probably were less connected with a basically new kind of trade policy, which was not set on skimming off the trade any more, but which supposedly also considered the profitability of the detour of free trade, as Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 697f., states. Rather, the Lower German merchants and Henry the Lion simply obeyed the force of circumstances: Only people with ship space could participate in sea trade.

52 Ellmers, Detlev, "Kogge und Holk als Schiffe der Hanse," in Michael Hundt and Jan Lokers, eds., *Hanse und Stadt. Akteure, Strukturen und Entwicklungen im regionalen und europäischen Raum. Festschrift für Rolf Hammel-Kiesow zum 65. Geburtstag* (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild 2014), 53–67, 58–61; Reinhard Paulsen, "Die Koggendiskussion in der Forschung. Methodische Probleme und ideologische Verzerrungen" *HGbll.* 128 (2010): 19–112, 86–96; Detlev Ellmers, "Koggen kontrovers," *HGbll.* 128 (2010): 113–140; Carsten Jahnke, "Koggen und kein Ende. Anmerkungen zu den Thesen von Reinhard Paulsen und Detlev Ellmers," *ZVLGA* 91 (2011): 305–320.

53 Carsten Jahnke, "Zur Interpretation des ersten Lübecker Schiffssiegels," *ZVLGA* 88 (2008), 21–22.

The Advance of Low German Merchants in the Baltic Region

On the south Baltic coast, the advance of the merchants was closely linked to the conquest and settlement of the coastal lands by the nobility and the farmers acting in connection with the forceful proselytizing of the Slavic—and in the thirteenth century –Prussian populations. In the Baltic States, proselytizing took the form of crusades featuring active and decisive participation by the merchants. Danes, Germans and Swedes (the latter mainly operating in Finland) carried out these crusades. However, the expansion of trade by Low German merchants to the Scandinavian countries occurred by peaceful means.

Conquest, conversion, and the expansion of commercial relationships did not progress continuously from West to East. After the conquest of Wagria and Polabia and the founding of Lübeck in 1143, the progress of the conquerors was initially halted. Only in 1164, with the subjugation of those Slavic lands extending to the Peene River, did Low German merchants begin to settle in greater numbers in locations that were primarily established adjacent to previously existing seaports (for example, in 1189 Rostock is documented as comprising a market with a church). However, these settlements soon surpassed the neighboring seaports. Only in the thirteenth century (starting with Rostock in 1218) did these settlements receive their charters, which, for a long time, obscured the actual origin of these branches. The majority of the settlers arrived from Lübeck by sea. However, as early as 1180, the Slavic city of Stettin was eclipsed by a German settlement whose inhabitants had arrived by land from the middle lower German area around Magdeburg.

While rather tentative progress was being made on the south Baltic Coast, Low German merchants set their sights toward Gotland via Lübeck in order to advance from there on to Novgorod and on to the Baltic Coast. This particular goal was in accordance with the tradition of those merchants who had previously participated in the trade of Baltic goods via Old Lübeck. In consequence, the changes that resulted from the founding of the German city of Lübeck did not take the form of a break with tradition or a new beginning. Rather, they can be explained as a continuous development from an existing system. The groups of people who participated had already known each other for centuries by virtue of their contacts in Schleswig, Old Lübeck, Wolin, and other trading centers.

For decades now, scholars have discussed when exactly the Low German merchants might have been able to reach Gotland in significant numbers. However, scholarly interpretation of the Artlenburg Treaty of 1161, the treaty by which Henry the Lion negotiated peace between the Goths and the Germans

after their bloody clashes at an unnamed location, has been a point of controversy. At present, archeological, numismatic, and written sources demonstrate that, beginning in the Carolingian era, one is least able to discern the activity of individual Low German merchants trading in the Baltic region; one of the earliest clues is a birch bark document from Novgorod in the 1020s written in the old Low German language, but employing the Latin alphabet.[54] On the other hand, in recent years, historic and archeological findings, especially findings from the archeology of seafaring, have shown that the superiority of the Low German merchant in the Baltic region did not start immediately upon the founding of Lübeck, but that it was earned through a long process that lasted approximately 100 years. The requisite ship space provided to the Low German merchants, primarily by the seafaring merchants of the Goths, has already been discussed. The Goths were extremely important to the aspiring city of Lübeck; thus a great deal of support exists for a thesis advocated by Scandinavian historians that the conflicts predating the Artlenburg Treaty took place in the Duchy of Saxony. According to the most recent and most thorough interpretation, Odelricus was probably not the guild master for the German merchants of Gotland, but an officer of Henry the Lion in the Duchy of Saxony who was given a mandate to punish crimes against Goths unconditionally and to avoid any delay in their affairs. One can only conclude that if the Goths had retreated from the Duchy of Saxony, the economic consequences would have probably been disastrous.[55]

Trade between Low German merchants and Russia in the second half of the twelfth century is clearly documented. On Gotland in the 1180s, these Low German merchants confiscated the trading goods of Russian merchants from Novotorzôk (Torzhok in northwest Russia) for unknown reasons.[56] The Russian-Gotlandish-German Treaty of 1191/92, in which an "old peace" is mentioned, was the result of the ensuing negotiations that took place in Novgorod through the Gutnish negotiator Arbud. Recently, Russian research attributes this negotiation to Henry the Lion and thus the 1160s. Among other things,

54 Valentin L Janin, "Mitteilungen auf ungewöhnlichem 'Papier'—Die Birkenrindendokumente von Novgorod," in Michael Müller-Wille, ed., *Novgorod. Das mittelalterliche Zentrum und sein Umland im Norden Russlands* (Neumünster; Wachholtz-Verlag, 2001), 109–120, 113.

55 Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 415–439; Thomas Riis, "Noch einmal das Artlenburg-Privileg—ein Werk Heinrichs des Löwen oder des Domherrn Marold?" in Hundt and Lokers, eds., *Hanse und Stadt*, 79–84; Detlev Ellmers, "Wie verlässlich ist das Artlenburg-Privileg überliefert?" *HGbll*, 132 (forthcoming).

56 Jon Lind situates the disagreements in Sweden and interprets Novitork as a mid Swedish city; Blomkvis, 462.

the treaty stipulates that merchants and emissaries had the right to sail to Novgorod, Germany, and Gotland unhindered.[57] Of course, this only makes sense if Low German merchants in the 1160s were already involved in trade with Novgorod.

Since the 1180s, German merchants had placed a secondary emphasis on the Russian trade as well as on the Duna trade in Livonia (which roughly corresponds with modern-day Estonia and Latvia). This practice began first in Gotland and here too, as in the case of Novgorod, they acted as companions to Gutnish merchants. Danish and Norwegian merchants were active there as well.[58] The Christianization of Livonia began a short time later. The first missionary, Meinhard, arrived in the mid 1180s "in the company of merchants" (*cum comitatu mercatorum*).[59] All the crusaders and their materials were shipped by way of Lübeck to Gotland and then on to Livonia. As a result, Lübeck and the transport capacity of the Low German merchants and skippers attracted the attention of papal policy makers in Europe.[60] In 1201, the city of Riga, seat of a bishopric and chapter of a cathedral, developed next to an older domestic settlement, like almost all cities in the Baltic region. In 1211, the settlement in Riga lured numerous merchants by granting them privileges. Riga was the second German city founded in the Baltic region; operating in the double function typical of this time and area, it served both as a support for the Christian mission as well as for the expansion of a trading sphere for the merchants.

Meanwhile, German merchants in Visby on Gotland settled and formed a German community (that in 1288 was to be united with a Gutnish community into a township). Long-distance traders from Lower Germany departed from Smolensk and made their way to the trading centers of Polozk and Witebsk on the Duna and there established a connection with Kiev and that part of Russia that until that time had been oriented toward Constantinople. In 1229 these merchants had forged a trade agreement with the prince in Riga. On their way through Novgorod and by means of their trade on the Duna, it is probable that the early Hansard merchants also brought Oriental luxury goods into the economic centers of northwestern Europe. This was in addition to local products

57 Anna Leonidovna Choroškevič, "Der Ostseehandel und der deutsch-russisch-gotländische Vertrag 1191/1192," in Stuart Jenks and Michael North, ed., *Der hansische Sonderweg? Beiträge zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Hanse*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, N.F., Bd. 39 (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 1993), 1–12.

58 *Heinrici Chronicon Livoniae*, I, c. 11, 8f.

59 Ibid., I, c. 2, 4f.

60 Urban, *Crusade*; Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *Popes*; Murray, *Crusade and Conversion*.

that consisted of wax and furs.[61] As early as the 1170s or 1180s, a rotunda church was built in Smolensk by local contractors on the grounds of the "German Court" (named so later in the thirteenth century). It was built in a form common to northern Germany and Scandinavia. The clients were probably Gutnish merchants (possibly already in the company of German merchants). This is excellent proof for the cooperation that existed between the local population, or, more accurately, the local rulers and the foreign merchants.[62]

And yet during the twelfth century, trade relations with Denmark and Sweden grew stronger. Henry the Lion had supposedly already concluded a commercial treaty with the king of the Swedes,[63] possibly in a mutual gesture of "free trade," a privilege he had granted to the Swedes in Lübeck. By at least the thirteenth century, German merchants, craftsmen, and miners were immigrating to Sweden, which realized an economic boom by virtue of the copper mining in Falun. Low German merchants settled in Kalmar around 1220 and took part in the founding of Stockholm in 1251. All told, the country's primary export goods were copper and iron, but also included agricultural and animal products such as fish and furs. Fabrics and salt were imported.

At that time, the provinces of Halland, Schonen (Scania), and Blekinge—all present-day possessions of Sweden—were part and parcel of the dominion of the Danish King. Consequently, Denmark, in possession of both Sund and Belt, ruled the entry and exit into and out of the Baltic Sea. Beginning in the fourteenth century (until recently Denmark was often called the 'fateful power of the Hanse'), this would become of great political importance to the trade traffic of the Hanseatic Cities. From the late twelfth century on, the herring market of Schonen became extremely important to the economy of the Wendish Hanse cities. Schleswig lost its function as a supra-regional fair and market to the East-West international trade fair that had been developing in Schonen since the first half of the twelfth century. Low German merchants from Lübeck could sail directly to the fairs in Schonen, to which they brought salt from Luneburg

61 Hans Wilhelm Haussig, *Die Geschichte Zentralasiens und der Seidenstraße in islamischer Zeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2. unveränderte Auflage 1994), 172f., 183ff.

62 Oleg Ioannisyan, "Between Byzantium and the Romanesque West: The Architecture of Old Rus in the tenth-thirteenth Centuries," in Michael Müller-Wille, ed., *Rom und Byzanz im Norden. Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Ostseeraum während des 8.–14. Jahrhunderts, vol. 2*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse Jg. 1997, 3/2 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1997), 297–323, 314f.

63 *Die Urkunden Heinrichs des Löwen, Herzogs von Sachsen und Bayern*, revised by Karl Jordan (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann 1957), no. * 115, 172 (in the following UHdL); Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 526.

and returned with freight herring that was coveted as Lenten fare. This trade in mass goods, unlike the Schleswig trade, which was apparently more focused on luxury goods, provided their operations with a second and very promising division. One can more fully appreciate the importance of the Fairs of Schonen to the City of Lübeck if one considers the fact that the powerful city on the Trave was obliged to submit to the Danish King, Knut VI, in order to free their merchants and ships that had been arrested at the fairs.

It is not known when merchants from the Baltic Region first arrived in Norway, but by the early thirteenth century Norwegian trade connections included England, Flanders, Holland, and the North German sea coast. By 1240, the export of grain, flour and malt to Bergen from Lübeck was already established. In Bergen, dried cod, produced in Northern Norway, was collected and made ready for export. Beginning in the mid-thirteenth century, the merchants of the Wendish Hanse Cities eventually succeeded in ousting the English and Flemish from the Norwegian market. This was accomplished with rye, which, due to agrarian development of lands pertaining to the Eastern settlements of Holstein, Lauenburg and Mecklenburg, was being produced in steadily increasing amounts. Furthermore, merchants primarily from the Wendish Hanse Cities began to make use of their position as 'winter seaters' in Bergen to take control of the market for dried cod as well.[64]

In 1231, the German Order initiated the conquest of Prussia, beginning their campaign in the heart of that country. That same year, Thorn (Torun) was founded and then Elbing in 1237 soon after the coast had been reached. However, Lübeck's participation in the foundation of this city is not supported by the sources as stated in earlier historical literature. With the issuance of the first, and second city charters to Koenigsberg in 1255 and 1286, the latter necessitated by the unfortunate destruction of the original city, all of the important (eventual) Hanse cities of the Baltic Region were established. Rural settlement began in the inland areas beyond the more established eastern communities of the Germans and intensified, reaching its furthest extent toward the end of the century in the most easterly portion of eastern Prussia. These rural settlements constituted a hinterland to the south Baltic coast from Mecklenburg to the Memel River and thus became the production area for the goods of the Hanseatic trade.

64 Arnved Nedkvitne, *The German Hansa and Bergen 1100–1600*. Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte N.F. vol. 70 (Cologne: Böhlau 2014); Mike Burkhardt, *Der hansische Bergenhandel im Spätmittelalter. Handel—Kaufleute—Netzwerke*. Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, N.F., vol. 60 (Cologne: Böhlau 2009).

From the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries, the agricultural and forestry products of this hinterland region, including grain, wood, ashes, pitch, and more, were precisely those provisions and raw materials needed by the densely populated 'industrial nations' of the Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Times. Such nations included Flanders, Brabant, the northern Netherlands, and England. Consequently, from the fourteenth century, the Dutch, Zealanders, and the English had all tried and eventually succeeded in eliminating the Hanseatic transit trade and purchasing these goods directly from their respective production areas.

The last chapter in the chronology for the expansion of Low German merchants throughout the Baltic Region was composed in the late thirteenth century when merchants from Lübeck received transit privileges within the Kingdom of Poland. In Poland, they followed the Vistula Route and established connections to Krakow and Hungary, the former well known for its rich copper deposits (Krakow was later called the copper house of the Hanse). In addition, connections to Silesia and Bohemia were also established. In Silesia, the merchants were drawn to the gold mines and in Bohemia, commercial relationships promised to deliver wax, tin, and silver. However, the extensive activity of individuals from Lübeck in the area was more than probably aimed at the exploitation of the Oriental Route created by the Vistula, Bug and RotreuBen, by which the merchants of Lübeck hoped to reach the Italian colonies of the Black Sea. After all, Kiev, which had until that point in time served as the hub for Oriental goods, had been conquered by the Mongols in 1240 and subsequently been removed from the trading system operating between the Orient and Eastern Central Europe.[65] With this penetration, the expansion of the Low German merchants within the Greater Baltic Region was complete.

Cologne, Flanders, and England

The second locus for the development of the Hanse lay to the West, where merchants from the City of Cologne played a role similar to that played by the merchants of Lübeck in the East. Thus, the Hanseatic region may be depicted as a great imaginary ellipse containing two foci in the cities of Lübeck and Cologne,[66] the latter vicariously representing the entire Lower Rhine with which the cities of the Ijssel and Zuijdersee were closely connected. Between

65 Roland Gehrke, *Die Hanse und Polen*, Hamburger Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen im europäischen Osten, vol. 2 (Lüneburg: Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1996), 7–51, 19.

66 Stoob, *Hanse*, 88.

this region and the eastern Duchy of Saxony, a territory strongly connected to the Baltic Region, was Westphalia. Collectively, merchants from Westphalia played an important role as both turntable and bridge in the trade relations between the East and the West until the fifteenth century.

In Western Europe, Flanders developed into a region of production and trade[67] centered on the wool cloth industry, which took off considerably in the mid-eleventh century. As early as the beginning of the twelfth century, the Counts of Flanders in Ypres, Lille, Messen, and Torhout established the first fairs in Northern Europe. During the same century, a new trade route was opened leading from Cologne, through Brabant and on to Ghent and Bruges. The route increased the importance of Flanders as a transit country for goods from England and France, which were delivered to the markets in Brabant and Germany.

The trading system of the Flemish, especially that trade conducted by the merchants of Ghent, who were supported by Emperor Frederick I, prompted counter measures by the merchants of Cologne, the most densely populated and economically powerful city in the empire. The latter erected an emporium restraint on trade goods in 1169, which was primarily aimed at the purchase of wine by Flemish merchants to the south of Cologne. Then, by special request of Frederick I, the merchants of Ghent had their earlier privileges affirmed by the Archbishop of Cologne, allowing them to travel and conduct business up the Rhine River and past Cologne.[68]

The people of Cologne, on the other hand, found an ally in the King of England, who loathed to see the strong position of the Flemish merchants in the English wool trade (English wool had been imported to Flanders since the early twelfth century) strengthened by an additional take-over of the trade in Rhine wine. Should this have occurred, the Flemish would have completely dominated the trade of northwest Europe by exercising their ability to bring wine from the Rhine River to England, English wool to Flanders, and Flanders cloth to the Rhine. To prevent this, King Henry II of England, in 1175/76, granted to the merchants of Cologne the furthest-reaching privileges for trading abroad of any twelfth-century German city.[69] In the thirteenth century,

67 David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* (London et al.: Longman, 1992), 111–115.

68 Regesta Imperii IV 2, 3, revised by Friedrich Opll (Vienna: Böhlau, 2001) n. 1855; also see ebd. n. 2469.

69 Hugo Stehkämper, "Friedrich Barbarossa und die Stadt Köln. Ein Wirtschaftskrieg am Niederrhein," in Hanna Vollrath and Stefan Weinfurter, ed., *Köln. Stadt und Bistum in Kirche und Reich des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Odilo Engels zum 65. Geburtstag*, Kölner Historische Abhandlungen, vol. 39 (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 1993), 367–413, 404–413;

these privileges became, in turn, the rock to which the privileges of Baltic cities were anchored and from which emerged the association of Low German merchants, or the *hansa Alemanie* (London, 1282).

In England, merchants from the Baltic cities encountered merchants from Westphalia and the Lower Rhine, who had already been trading there for some time.[70] The encounter did not go smoothly. The personal interests of individual groups within the city prevailed and as a result ensured that the branch of Lower Rhenish merchants from Cologne and the branch of merchants from the Baltic would remain distinct from one another. Until the early sixteenth century, merchants from the Baltic, including those from Hamburg, dominated trade with the eastern coast of England from Lynn to Newcastle. On the other hand, trade conducted by the merchants of Cologne and Westphalia was concentrated on the Stalhof in London as well as on Ipswich and Colchester. The Stalhof served as the *gildhalla* for the merchants of Cologne, as documented, from 1175/76 on. Only in the mid-thirteenth century did a joint venture between merchant groups of the Empire develop.

In the Empire, the trade in Flemish cloth was still in Flemish, especially Ghentish, hands throughout the first half of the thirteenth century. The presence of Flemish cloth is noted in the Baltic as early as the twelfth century as cloth from Ypres available at Novgorod in 1153. Whether or not Flemish merchants had personally gone as far a Novgorod in the twelfth century is uncertain, but their arrival was a documented occurrence in the late thirteenth century. In 1262, all Flemish merchants were granted an exemption from duty in the areas surrounding Brunswig and Magdeburg, and in 1268 Ghentish merchants received special privileges in Hamburg where they sold fabric and French wine and obtained grain from Holstein and Altmark for their return trip. In 1273 the Flemish are noted to have been present in the City of Kiel, and then a short time later in the Baltic cities of Wismar, Stralsund, and Greifswald.[71] Meanwhile, merchants from the Baltic cities had been active in Flanders since

Franz Irsigler, "Köln und die Staufer im letzten Drittel des 12. Jahrhunderts," in Wilfried Hartman, ed., *Europas Städte zwischen Zwang und Freiheit. Die europäische Stadt um die Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts.* Schriftenreihe der Europa-Kolloquien im Alten Reichstag (Regensburg: 1995), 83–96; Terrence H. Lloyd, *England and the German Hanse, 1157–1611: A Study of their Trade and Commercial Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

70 For a new interpretation of what happened see Carsten Jahnke, " 'Homines imperii' und 'osterlinge'. Selbst- und Fremdbezeichnungen hansischer Kaufleute im Ausland am Beispiel Englands, Flanderns und des Ostseeraumes im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert" *HGbll.* 129 (2011): 8–24.

71 Nicholas, *Flanders*, 168f.

the mid-thirteenth century.[72] Supposedly, these Baltic merchants were successful in preventing the Flemish merchants from purchasing Baltic goods during the latter half of the century and subsequently forced the Flemish to return home without any freight. As a result, only the early Hanse merchants are supposed to have garnered the revenue available from the lucrative Eastern trade with Flanders. After 1270, Flemish merchants had also lost their hegemony over the trade with England.[73] And to make matters worse, Low German merchants now muscled their way into the business of exporting the English wool to Flanders as well. However, even their stake in the export of English wool was relatively small when compared to that of the Italian merchants. Finally, in 1294, the *mercatores Romani imperii* officially denied passage to Flemish ships attempting to sail in the Baltic Sea.[74] Therefore, from the fourteenth century on, Flemish merchants, and especially those from Bruges, concentrated on the intermediary functions of commerce, working as both brokers and hosteliers. However, this retreat from the active pursuit of trading abroad, turned out to be anything but a backward step into passivity. On the contrary, it eventually allowed Bruges to become the 'cradle of capitalism'.[75]

Thus it was that by approximately the middle of the thirteenth century, the early Hanseatic trading system had taken shape. Merchants from the cities between the Lower Rhine and the Elbe moved their long distance trading operations both to the East and to the West. In the East, this was especially true of trading ventures in Visby, in Novgorod and, by way of the Duna, in Smolensk. In the West, England and Flanders was the key. The merchants, in turn, sold the goods they purchased in these and other respective target countries in their hometowns or at trade fairs on the Lower Rhine. Merchants from the new Baltic cities moved directly into their Western target countries. Trade routes in the Baltic were primarily sea routes, however the land route that ran from Lübeck to the West via Westphalia was the most heavily traveled due to the strong domestic trade amongst the merchants from the Lower Rhine and Westphalia; nevertheless, from Hamburg on, the sea route was utilized as well. One must also be cautious not to underestimate the volume of traffic that arrived in the southern cities of Brandenburg, Altmark and Lower Saxony.

72 Carsten Jahnke, "Homines imperii," 24–29.

73 Nicholas, *Flanders*, 177f.

74 *Hansisches Urkundenbuch*, ed. Hansischer Geschichtsverein, vol. 1, revised by Konstantin Höhlbaum (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1876) [abbreviated HUB 1], No. 1154, 1155.

75 James M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism, 1280–1390* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 189f.

These supplied important trading goods and were also consumers of goods that had originated from trading branches abroad.

However, it wasn't until the outset of the fourteenth century that the Flemish, English, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Slavic, Baltic and Russian merchants were almost completely driven from the primary routes of the early Hanseatic trading system. Virtually no information exists regarding the extent of trade conducted by these other groups.

The Traveling Associations of the Low German Merchants

During the middle Ages, merchants throughout Europe banded together in voluntary associations in order to safeguard their interests by means of joint trading. Aside from an obvious interest with regard to trade, these associations also performed social and religious functions. Usually, the organization of these associations was such that they could make decisions, decide on procedure, and punish rule breaking at their meetings. Such merchant associations were primarily organized into two larger conglomerations, including those formed by merchants in their respective hometowns and those formed at the travel destinations of merchants abroad.[76] The former can be further differentiated into associations comprising all the merchants within a town (for example those in St. Omer and Valenciennes), and into associations that united the merchants in their travel destinations (i.e., the association for the Schleswig travelers from Soest and the fraternities Danicum in Cologne). This was particularly true of the association formed in the bigger cities with far-reaching trade relations.

The *kore*, law of self-governance, allowed the merchants to manage their own affairs without the need for a judge. The *kore* was the crux of specific rights of merchants (ius mercatorum), the origin of which dated back to antiquity. This ability to self regulate was a feature of the (free) union, a basic form

76 Meir Kohn, "Merchant Associations in Pre-Industrial Europe," in idem, *The Origins of Western Economic Success: Commerce, Finance, and Government in Pre-Industrial* Europe (Hanover: Department of Economics, Dartmouth College, 2003), http://ssrn.com/abstract=427763 (accessed August 6, 2008); critical towards the positive image of merchant unions in research: Roberta Dessy and Sheilagh Ogilvie, *Social Capital and Collusion: The Case of Merchant Guilds*, CESifo Working Paper Series No. 1037, September 2003, http://ssrn.com/abstract=449263 (accessed August 6, 2008); Selzer, *Mittelalterliche Hanse*, 13–30. A new approach by Sheilagh C. Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade: merchant guilds, 1000–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

of organization of medieval society, which is demonstrated in the early Middle Ages in the rural community, thus was a commercial and urban phenomenon of the 11th century.

However, in the written tradition, the aristocratic and manorial view of the class society predominated. The *Einung* was not sufficiently noted in the written sources, and when it was, only in a devaluated manner. As a result, its actual importance to medieval society, and the role of the individual within it, remained unrecognized for far too long. The *Einung*, which often formed under circumstances of social and political disorganization, was a voluntary alliance of individuals created for mutual aid and based upon the principles of agreement and consensus. This meant that the members (associates) of an *Einung* promised to keep the regulations of their federation. In each case, these regulations had been decided upon by *Willkuer* (voluntary agreement).[77]

In the twelfth century, long distance trade to locations abroad was organized around caravans for land-bound trade and around convoys for sea-bourn trade. During the thirteenth century, this mode of organization continued in the context of regionally variable durations. The uncertainty of highways and roads, highlighted by a constant fear of robbery, compelled merchants—who since Carolingian times had possessed the right to carry a sword—to travel in groups. However, individual merchants still went on long journeys with only a few companions as well. In Northern Europe, such trips are documented in the late ninth century excursions of Ottar, and they are memorialized in the thirteenth century epos of 'Good Gerhard'.[78]

In early Hanse times, however, traveling associations seem to have been the standard. Both enroute and upon their arrival at destinations abroad, these merchant alliances were called *Hansen* throughout Western Europe. In the early middle Ages, the meaning of the term "Hanse" is documented as 'group/crowd' (lat. *cohors*). A second meaning referenced the fee that was collected for participation in joint trading (and which, originally, was most probably a manorial and possibly royal tribute). Finally, the third referred to the right to trade

77 Otto Gerhard Oexle, "Gilde und Kommune. Über die Entstehung von 'Einung' und 'Gemeinde' als Grundformen des Zusammenlebens in Europa," in Peter Blickle, ed., *Theorien kommunaler Ordnung in Europa* (München: Oldenbourg, 1996).

78 Janet Bately and Anton Englert, ed., *Othere's Voyages. A late ninth-century account of voyages along the coasts of Norway and Denmark and its cultural context*, Maritime Culture of the North, vol. 1 (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2007); Sonja Zöller, *Kaiser, Kaufmann und die Macht des Geldes. Gerhard Unmaze von Köln als Finanzier der Reichspolitik und der "Gute Gerhard" des Rudolf von Ems*, Forschungen zur Geschichte der älteren deutschen Literatur, vol. 16 (München: Fink, 1993).

jointly. Thus, as often is the case in the Middle Ages, personal, legal and occupational characteristics were covered by a single word.[79] In the mid-eleventh century, such a 'Hanse' is documented for the first time, albeit indirectly, within the statutes of the Valencienne merchant guild, whose members were forbidden to trade with a *hanseur* (a foreign and thus traveling merchant). Furthermore, the latter could under no circumstances become members of the guild.[80] This disposition exemplifies the mistrust that traveling foreign merchants faced—especially from their colleagues.

Since Carolingian times, merchants who applied were taken under the protection of kings and equipped with guarantees for safe conduct (protection privileges).[81] Consequently, these merchants answered directly to the king and continued to do so even when the sovereigns, in whose jurisdiction the guild operated, were the ones to obtain the royal safe-conduct. The individual merchant now needed only to apply for admission to the circle of merchants benefiting from the king's protection agreement with the particular guild operating within the respective jurisdiction.

In the twelfth and, especially, the thirteenth century, the *regnum Teutonicum* presided over a period in which, ever more royal rights were ceded to the territorial sovereigns. As a result, royal protection for merchants within the Empire lost importance, but continued to be vital to foreign excursions. Thus, each merchant guild within the Empire, regardless of its origins, which had sought the king's protection, became part of a larger association of the king's, or emperor's, merchants and in turn became known abroad as hominess, or *mercatores imperatoris* ("people" or "merchants of the emperor").[82] Irrespective of economic and/or regional competition, there existed a constitutionally defined union of all German merchants abroad, who were under the king's protection.

Before engaging in an excursion abroad, the members of a guild would have formed a Hanse and elected a *wik*/Hanse earl, who subsequently received a charge for ensuring the protection granted by the king—or in his name by the

79 Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, "Hanse und Gilde. Genossenschaftliche Organisationsformen im Bereich der Hanse und ihre Bezeichnungen," *Hansische Geschichtsblätter 100* (1982), 21–40.

80 Hans van Werveke, "Das Wesen der Flandrischen Hanse," *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 75/76 (1957/58), 7–20, 8f.

81 Regarding the following Ernst Pitz, *Bürgereinung und Städteeinung. Studien zur Verfassungsgeschichte der Hansestädte und der deutschen Hanse*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte; N.F., vol. 52 (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 2001), 246–273.

82 Jahnke, "Homines imperii," 1–8, 53–57.

townleader of the guild. In other words, he was charged with holding the court of merchants, leading the traveling company on excursions abroad and levying fees owed to the king for their protection. No oaths have ever been documented in connection with the early merchant guilds and traveling groups—neither as pledge to the king or town ruler nor as fellowship oaths for members of the merchant guilds and traveling companies. The afore-mentioned *kore*, the right to decide, was also central to the specific rights of traveling merchants (ius mercatorum). In consequence, merchants on trade excursions were able to conduct their own affairs beginning in the early Middle Ages. This form of autonomy was, in turn, acknowledged by the various sovereigns.

The traditions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with regard to the constitution of traveling companies, the Hansen (sometimes they are also called 'guilds'), have not been conclusively demonstrated. While sources from the *regnum teutonicum* mention only the traveling companies of individual cities,[83] the Hansen of Flanders possessed the ability to admit outside merchants. However, this admission was sometimes possible only with the payment of exorbitant fees intended to ensure that outside access could be limited. In England, merchants, who met while actively engaged in trade, had been permitted, to organize a Hanse since the 1120's. This organization was, to some extent, based on the hometown guild, which enjoyed royal protection throughout the isles and sovereign territory of the English crown on the continent. The same right also applied to foreigners;[84] this is why merchants from Cologne, Kiel, Hamburg, and Lübeck made contracts with the English king in behalf of their Hanse in the first place.

Delimitation towards foreign merchants (merchants not from their town), even when they haled from a neighboring town within the same region, represented a key characteristic in the history of trade. Therefore, overcoming this competition abroad on a permanent basis became an important accomplishment for Low German Merchants who, perhaps in the late twelfth century and certainly by the thirteenth century, were thus enabled to face their respective treaty partners as a single unit. This alliance was accomplished in various branches (offices, *Kontore*) and countries at various times. For example, beginning at the end of the twelfth century in Novgorod where the alliance

83 Ernst Pitz, "Einstimmigkeit oder Mehrheitsbeschluß? Ein heimlicher Verfassungsstreit um die Vollmachten der Ratssendeboten auf den Hansetagen," in Wilfried Ehbrecht, ed., *Verwaltung und Politik in Städten Mitteleuropas. Beiträge zu Verfassungsnorm und Verfassungswirklichkeit in altständischer Zeit*, Städteforschung A, vol. 34 (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 1994), 115–146, 138f.

84 Klaus Friedland, *Die Hanse* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991), 102f.

was forged together with Gothic merchants. During the early thirteenth century, West European merchants also formed similar, although non-permanent alliances. These included the association of *mercatores de XVII villes* including members from Flanders and Northern France (first documented in 1230), which, at the time of their decline, was called the 'Hanse of 17 cities', and the nations of the Italian merchants, who, like the Flemish and French, had also formed a *universitas* at the fairs of Champagne. Sometime around 1200 (documented in 1241), Flemish merchants from 52 cities had formed an umbrella organization in London, the "Hanse of London". However, since the fourteenth century, these organizations were of no further importance.[85] Similar associations comprising fair attendees were supported by sovereigns in Flanders as well as in the regions of the Lower Rhine, and the Ijessel. This support was intended to add greater importance to the trading traffic of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century fairs, which represented advancing markets.[86]

In the Baltic, the traveling companies that sailed from Lübeck to Gotland, and later to Novgorod and Riga, seem to have formed, almost exclusively, abroad at their respective trade destinations on Gotland or in Riga. However, such organization could occur at an important milestone along their way as in the case of those forming during the journey to Novgorod at the mouth of the Neva River. These were the first associations of the early Hanse to consist of merchants gathered from a collection of various individual traveling companies. In response, these merchants and their companies discontinued their competition with each other and thus constituted *universitas mercatorum* in arrangements that differed from town to town though part of the comprehensive *universitas mercatorum*. This is very obvious in the trade treaties of the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth centuries as in the case of the 1229 treaty the Prince of Smolensk concluded with the long distance traders from Riga, Visby, Lübeck, Soest, Munster, Dortmund, and Bremen. This treaty was composed in Riga "in front of the many merchants of the Roman Empire" and confirmed "by the seal of all merchants".[87] The Novgorod Schra (Order of St. Peter's

85 Nicholas, *Flanders*, 166–168; van Werveke, "Flandrische Hanse," 15–17; Kohn, "Merchant Associations," 6–8.

86 Friedland, *Hanse*, 99; Franz Irsigler, "Jahrmärkte und Messesysteme im westlichen Reichsgebiet bis ca. 1250," in Peter Johanek and Heinz Stoob, ed., *Europäische Messen und Märktesysteme in Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, Städteforschung A, vol. 39 (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 1996), 1–33.

87 HUB 1, no. 232.

Court) was composed in the mid-thirteenth century and cites "the wisest of all cities in the German realm" as its authors.[88]

The merchants themselves called the organization, which they formed on Gotland (and which is the best preserved of all) around the middle of the thirteenth century, *universitas mercatorum Romani imperii Gotlandiam frequentantium* (the association of merchants from the Roman Empire visiting Gotland).[89] In this way, they essentially declared that their members were connected, not through local or regional origin, but by virtue of belonging to the Empire and in consequence of their shared trading destination, Gotland, the central gather point for the Eastern trade. This *universitas* included the provision for self-governance and (most likely already in 1229, see above, or at the latest beginning in the mid-thirteenth century) a seal with the abovementioned text as an inscription. In scientific literature, this federation is called the "Gotländische Genossenschaft" (Gotlandish Union), a term of the scientific art from the nineteenth century, which is undocumented in the sources.

Gutnish and German merchants on Gotland formed the *gilda communis*, which thus also became (or was part of) the *universitas mercatorum*. In 1191/92, this merchant association dispatched an emissary, the Goth Arbud (Herbord), to the Prince of Novgorod for the purpose of finalizing a trade treaty. Ultimately, the prince, as the English king would also eventually do, acknowledged this federation of merchants stemming from various ethnic origins as the recipient of the rights stipulated by the treaty. The formation of a *universitas* was the consistent and legal consequence of a certain trading practice in which Gutnish merchants initially transported their Low German trade partners from Lübeck to Gotland and probably, a bit later, from Gotland to Novgorod. At first, this transportation took place on Gutnish ships, but was later carried out on mixed fleets. Such cooperation was so successful for both parties that it was also extended to the trade with England. This community of Gutnish and Low German merchants lasted more than 100 years and was one of the few 'international' mainstays of early Hanseatic history.

The *gilda commnunis* thus seems to have been a federation of local Gutnish merchants and German guests in Visby enjoying an autonomous jurisdiction. The latter was probably the reason why Bishop Albert of Riga made the 1211 establishment of a *gilda communis* in Riga and in the Duna trade contingent

88 Wolfgang Schlüter, ed., *Die Novgoroder Schra in sieben Fassungen vom XIII. bis XVII. Jahrhundert*. (Lübeck: Lübcke und Nöhring, 1916).

89 Detlef Kattinger, *Die Gotländische Genossenschaft. Der frühhansisch-gotländische Handel in Nord- und Westeuropa*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, N.F., vol. 47 (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 1999), *passim*; Jahnke, "Homines imperii," 29–47.

upon his personal approval.[90] Naturally, without autonomous control, the guild would not have been able to restrict his own rights as mayor and sovereign.

The manner in which trade dealings were performed in the early Hanseatic era is rarely documented. However, the Low German merchants seem to have been flexible and obviously did not attempt, as an earlier image of the German advance into the Baltic Region suggests, to enforce their own forms of law. Instead, as is documented in Estonia, they conformed to local trading habits.[91] Among other reasons, this was certainly a question of survival, and that probably not merely in the economic sense, so long as their own position was not strong enough to enable them to dictate conditions themselves. In accordance with a virtually document-free system of exchange, union trade conducted by the members of the city guilds is only recorded in some few individual cases. However, from these few cases, one may conclude that early Hanseatic traveling companies, or the individual town traveling companies from which they were comprised, also engaged in collective trading. From the efforts put forth by merchants and cities since the late twelfth century to attain freedom from the joint liability so closely associated with collective trade, one can deduce that this form of trading was common.[92]

Beginning in the mid-thirteenth century, company trading in the form of bilateral Hanse *wedderlegghinge* (refutation) is well documented; its origins more than likely stretching back to the tenth century. The term *wedderlegghinge* expresses the apparently archaic founding action for the company, or pooling of capital. One can just imagine two merchants standing across the table from one another and pushing two piles of money together to form the collective capital for the company. The essential characteristics of such a company were shaped during a mainly document-free time period as can witnessed in the simple proportions of 1:1 and 1:2 employed for the deposit of capital. This capital was managed only by one of the two partners involved and this partner was usually the one with the smaller deposit. This partner consequently conducted trade excursions, but likely did so without the obligation to follow special instructions, and this in spite of the tendency of sources to sometimes refer to this partner as a page or serf subservient to the other, who was called the lord. The profits were often shared, which may not be understood as a form of pay-off in those cases in which there were different deposits. Meanwhile, there was no uniform practice for the division of the losses. In the mid-twelfth century, merchants were already used to taking the goods or the money of a colleague on a trading excursion (the colleague did not take part in the excursion), but whether they took these as a form of company trade or in connection with a commission business cannot be conclusively demonstrated from the city charter of Medebach.[93]

Staring in 1230, trading companies of Lübeck citizens and foreign merchants are finally, although indirectly, mentioned in the oldest customs registry for the City of Lübeck.[94] A similar form of joint trading, in which one partner functioned exclusively as a 'silent partner' so to speak, is found in old Nordic sources dating from the tenth century. The pooling of goods, known as *felag*, was a very common institution and is documented in runic inscriptions as well as in the literature of the sagas. In one type of *felag*, fellow traders embarked on trading excursions together, while in the other, only one of the partners traveled and then conducted the business alone. In Scandinavia, the intensive development of merchants' law in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries gives one reason to believe that these forms of trading and incorporation were the result of an independent development and were not adopted by the North from Mediterranean practices.[95]

The economic success of the early Hanse merchants was therefore achieved with decidedly and legally basic forms of trade as well as with the trade of unions, company trade in the form of refutation, and commission and private trade (proper trade). These forms were common in Northern Europe and, therefore, cannot have been the reason for the shear impact of early merchants from the (later) Hanse. The actual key to success probably had more to do with the exclusion of internal competition and unified action in the targeted areas located within their trading territory. The most important effects of this unified action were three. First, the merchants were able, jointly and without competition, to purchase sizable amounts of goods to meet large demands

90 HUB 1, No. 88.

91 Blomkvist, *Discovery*, 505, 519f.

92 Rolf Sprandel, "Die Interferenz von Gesellschaften und Genossenschaften im hansischen Handel," in Nils Jörn, Detlef Kattinger and Horst Wernicke, ed., *Genossenschaftliche Strukturen in der Hanse*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, N.F., vol. 48 (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 1999), 79–100.

93 Albrecht Cordes, *Spätmittelalterlicher Gesellschaftshandel im Hanseraum*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, N.F., vol. 45 (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 1998), 58–64.

94 UBStL 1, No. 32, p. 38.

95 Carsten Müller-Boysen "félagi, mötunautr, háseti und gildbrothær. Die Spuren genossenschaftlicher Organisationsformen unter Kaufleuten im frühmittelalterlichen Skandinavien," in Nils Jörn, Detlef Kattinger and Horst Wernicke, ed., *Genossenschaftliche Strukturen in der Hanse*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, N.F., vol. 48 (Cologne.: Böhlau-Verlag, 1999), 13–26, 15–19.

within their vast hinterland. The merchant's biggest advantage was the connection between the land and sea-borne trades, which, for the domestic merchants of the early Hanse and for the seafaring merchants of the Baltic, directly linked both the purchasing and selling regions. Due to the amounts of trade goods exchanged, they soon became indispensable to the economy of the respective target countries and their rulers. During the thirteenth century, the merchants and cities of the early Hanse developed the connection between land and sea-borne trade into a superior logistical advantage, in which infra structure provided by the cities and merchant associations, including port facilities, shipping yards, storage locations, and displays for goods, played the pivotal role. In those times (as today), means and routes of transportation, as well as storage facilities, were deciding criteria in the expansion of markets. Quite important was the cog, which in earlier historiography had been considered to be the central innovation of the Hanse merchants. Aside from the first documented cogs of the Baltic, all of them coming from South Jutland, the cog was not an especially large, fast, or durable ship; Scandinavian ships were more efficient by far. And yet the cog was a completely economical form of transportation. It could be built with reasonable effort (for example, with sawn over hewn planks), it could be steered across the North and Baltic Seas with relative security, and it could be hard for pirates to grapple with because of its high sides.[96]

Despite these advantages, it was not the cog that aided the Hanse merchants in attaining their ultimate success, but their own economic superiority. Second, the strength of the position held by the merchants of the early Hanse enabled them to gain extensive privileges, which, above all, contained legal protections and custom discounts, or waivers and ensured a relatively autonomous position (which during the early thirteenth century applied initially only to Novgorod and in part to the Guildhall in London) for their branches (offices, *Kontore*). This relatively autonomous position was a key difference between this and other kinds of trade branches, such as the Fondaco dei Tedesci of

96 Ole Crumlin-Pedersen, "Die Bremer Kogge—ein Schlüssel zur Geschichte des Schiffbaus im Mittelalter," in Gabriele Hoffmann and Uwe Schnall, ed., *Die Kogge. Sternstunde der deutschen Schifffsarchäologie*, Schriften des Deutschen Schiffahrtsmuseums vol. 60, (Hamburg: Convent-Verlag, 2003), 256–270; Christian Radtke, "Die Kogge," in Heinrich Mehl, ed., *Historische Schiffe in Schleswig-Holstein. Vom Nydamboot zur Gorch Fock* (Heide: Westholsteinische Verlagsanstalt Boyens, 2002), 38–50. An intensive debate is taking place between Paulsen, "Koggendiskussion", Ellmers, "Koggen kontrovers", Jahnke, "Kein Ende", Ellmers, "Kogge und Holk."

Venice, which served as a control for foreign merchants.[97] Within their own jurisdiction, Low German merchants had the right to pronounce and enforce punishments. They were independent of the respective mayors, except for cases involving conflicts between (early) Hanse merchants and townspeople.

Third, an interest common to the cities from which the merchants came arose from the organizational form of legal unions in the *gemene kopman* of the foreign offices. This common interest facilitated the development of a union of Hanse cities, also from the communities of the *gemene kopman* of the foreign branches. After all, the merchant guilds of the individual towns were as much a part of the *gemene kopman* of the foreign branches as their comrades were members of the urban merchant guilds, which, in turn, were a part of the municipality of the respective hometowns. One can see how closely the merchants and cities were interwoven from the fact that trading treaties (privileges), originally negotiated by merchants in the branches abroad, formed the basis of trade for the entire alliance well into the sixteenth century.

'Commercial Revolution' and the Position of Long Distance Traders on the Council

The economic, social and urban pre-requisites for the increasingly closer connection between the merchants' traveling companies and the cities are depicted in this chapter. Their political history follows.

With regards to economic history, the thirteenth century bore 'commercial revolution' as a theme. The term 'commercial revolution' was coined to describe the fundamental changes to the trading organization of the Italian merchants that had taken place since the twelfth century. The long distance traders no longer traveled to the trade fairs; instead, they conducted their business from the offices in their hometowns. They sent out factors to the buying and selling places, which in turn settled there and conducted the business of their senior in situ on location. This system enabled the senior partner to be

97 Angelo Pichierri, *Die Hanse—Staat der Städte. Ein ökonomisches und politisches Modell der Städtevernetzung*, Stadt, Raum und Gesellschaft, vol. 10 (Opladen: Leske & Budrich 2000), 82; Anna Leonidovna Choroškevič, "Der deutsche Hof in Novgorod und die deutsche Herberge (Fondaco dei Tedeschi) in Venedig im 13. / 14. Jahrhundert. Eine vergleichende Vorstudie" in Ortwin Pelc and Gertrud Pickhan, eds., *Zwischen Lübeck und Novgorod. Wirtschaft, Politik und Kultur im Ostseeraum vom frühen Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert. Norbert Angermann zum 60. Geburtstag* (Lüneburg: Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1996), 67–87.

simultaneously 'present' in several places at once, thus increasing his volume of trade. Because this kind of trade required more money than before (in Italy the trading of goods and money was combined), and as a result of the introduction of documents for credit, new dimensions of trade became possible. From the end of the thirteenth century, these new dimensions of trade were known and learned by the Low German merchants attending the fairs of Champagne. As a result, a division of labor occurred, which, in turn, divided the traditional career of the traveling merchant into three professional fields: (1) the settled merchant concerned with financing and the organization of his wholesale and long distance trade; (2) the carriers, land carters, and skippers who delivered the merchants' goods to the desired location, and (3) the factor, or associate of the trading company, who resided abroad.[98]

However, one did not operate through resident factors within the Hanse's region, rather one appointed a representative or junior (younger) trade partner for each individual trade excursion. This development in the Low German region seems to have occurred over an extended period of time, which began, at the latest, in the twelfth century. This is proved in the city charter for the tiny Westphalian town of Medebach (dated to the mid-twelfth century), which mentions the practice of entrusting another merchant with a trip 'to Denmark or to Russia' with one's own goods or buying money.

The transition from traveling merchant to resident merchant also had a social aspect rooted in the individual choice of lifestyle. Obviously, the succession of various trade forms had already taken the course that follows long before the thirteenth century: to begin with, a young traveling merchant would extend his business, eventually trading with areas where he could not be present himself, and then, later, would completely settle down and dispense with seafaring altogether. The life of a landowner possessing private means would have been the next logical step.[99] In this regard, it was probably not older merchants settling down, a practice which must already have existed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but rather the greater number of individuals choosing this profession in the thirteenth century and the correspondingly enormous economic potential of expansion for these individuals, which led to

98 Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit. The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (London. Thames & Hudson, 2002), 19. For a new approach on the political impacts which led to the commercial revolution which differs from Raymond de Roovers theory see Edwin Hunt and James Murray, *The History of Business in Medieval Europe 1200–1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 55–57.

99 Gerhard Rösch, "Zur Bildung des Kaufmanns und Seefahrers in Nordeuropa. Zwei Texte des 13. Jahrhunderts," *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 110 (1992), 17–41, 38f.

the increasing rank of councilmen, who were also long distance traders in the Hanse region.

Therefore, during the thirteenth century, apart from long distance traders, members of the urban elite came from families who, in part, had had, as members of the social group of *ministeriales* (Dienstleute des Stadtherrn im "gehobenen" Dienst), experience with territorial administration for two or more generations, but had also had experience in representing their own personal interests in the presence of their respective town lords. The financial possibilities that likely lay open to individual members of these elite groups were by far greater than what historians had assumed only a few decades ago.[100] Arnold Fitz Thetmar, operating in London, was known as the first chronicler of London. His strong hereditary roots to the German trading centers (his father had been from Bremen and his mother from Cologne) make it seem natural that from 1251 on, he served as alderman of the German merchants traveling to England. Presumably, it was he who provided substantial support to Richard of Cornwall in his campaign to capture the crown and title of King of the Romans. In gratitude of this support, Bremen and Cologne, the hometowns of his parents, received special and improved privileges for their dealings in England.[101]

Until the end of the fourteenth century, social origin and wealth were the decisive criteria for the social acceptance of urban elites into the nobility. After all, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a number of those employed in the business of long distance trading had themselves originated from the very social groups responsible, during the same period, for the emergence of the lower nobility of the country. In fact, contemporary sources began to describe knighthood and urban citizenship as being dissimilar in rank only near the end of the fourteenth century.[102] The significant constitutional status, which Lübeck had held as a free town since 1226, may have been possible, in large part, due to the quality of rank maintained by its elites.

Returning to the subject of council membership for merchants, it is clear that their numbers on the council depended on the economic structure for

100 Wolfgang von Stromer summarizes: "Hochfinanz, Wirtschaft und Politik im Mittelalter," in Friedhelm Burgard, Alfred Haverkamp, Franz Irsigler and Winfried Reichert, eds., *Hochfinanz im Westen des Reiches 1150–1500*, Trierer Historische Forschungen, vol. 31 (Trier: Trierer Historische Forschungen, 1996), 1–16, 8–13.

101 Natalie Fryde, "Arnold Fitz Thedmar und die Entstehung der Großen Deutschen Hanse," *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 107 (1989), 27–42.

102 Hammel-Kiesow, "Neue Aspekte," 67–73; Kurt Andermann and Peter Johanek, eds., *Zwischen Nicht-Adel und Adel*, Vorträge und Forschungen, vol. 53 (Stuttgart: Thorbecke 2001).

the respective city. As a roughly drawn rule, one can safely assume that the councils of cities located on a seaboard were dominated by the merchants of the long distance trade. Meanwhile, one can also assume that in inland cities, where trades in handicrafts possessed a greater economic importance, there would be a more pronounced participation on the councils by the craftsmen. However, in reality, a great many guildsmen (even when the sources could only list them as such) were of higher status than the merchants. During the constitutional wars of the late thirteenth century (e.g. Erfurt 1283, Braunschweig 1292/94), council participation by the tradesmen was a reality in many inland cities. Yet, in other cities, long distance traders were successful in excluding the representatives of elite groups with competing interests from the council: in Goslar the lower nobility, in Magdeburg the Episcopal ministerials, in Hamburg the land-owning families, and in Lübeck the landowners of similar rank.

From Princely to Municipal Protection of Merchants

As previously noted, major political powers in the Baltic Region continually attempted to control the most essential elements of the profitable East-West trade, namely the sea routes and the ports. So far, in tracing the succession of these powers within the region since the early twelfth century, one must note the following developments: First, the initial formation of western Slavic states, including indications for the formation of a 'Slavic Hanse'; second, the reign of Knut Lavard, who connected the western and eastern Baltic regions (facilitated by his marriage to a princess of Novgorod); third, the ascension of Lothar III, whose continued expansion in the region was likely only impeded by his death. About 20 years after Lothar's death, his grandson, Henry the Lion, became the protector of the Low German merchants. And while he did not found Lübeck or select the city's economically advantageous location, he did support the Low German merchants of his realm by means of both his power and his reputation. Beyond the aforementioned dispatch of an emissary to the northern lands for the purpose of negotiating the peace treaty of Artlenburg between the Goths and Germans (Artlenburg Treaty), Henry concluded treaties with Sweden, and possibly Novgorod. Under his protection, the merchants traded and expanded their trade areas while negotiating the treaties he as ruler had concluded. In short, it was a typical relationship for the era: the ruler utilizing his position of power and authority to provide protection to the long distance merchants of his realm.

After the deposition of Duke Henry in 1180/81, the position of Low German merchants in the Baltic was significantly weakened due to their extreme distance from the Emperor. Thus it seems rather paradoxical that the first truly spectacular progress in the Baltic advance of the Low German merchants should have been documented in written sources only after the dethronement of Henry the Lion. To demonstrate: Around 1180, they settled in Visby only to advance to the Duna Delta soon thereafter and by 1191, had finally obtained their own court in Novgorod.[103] With the annexation of North Elbia into his empire, Knut VI of Denmark had succeeded in building up a Danish superpower, which, under his brother and successor, Waldemar II, finally began to extend beyond Denmark (including Schleswig) beginning in 1219.

This expansion proceeded from Denmark, via Hamburg and Lübeck along the south Baltic coast from 1219 to Sambia and Estonia (including the islands of Dago and Oesel), and, on the opposite shore, included Oeland as well as the provinces of Blekinge, Skane, and Halland, which are now located in the southern portion of modern-day Sweden.[104] In the time of the *pax Waldemariana*, the Low German merchants of the southwest Baltic coast, and especially those of Lübeck whose city was under the direct governance of Waldemar II himself (Waldemar had confirmed all of Lübeck's privileges), were able to expand their trade connections in peace upon the now tranquil Baltic Sea.[105] Naturally, they also did so under a guarantee of royal protection. During this period, the eventual Hanse cities of the south Baltic coast, almost all of which lay within Waldemar's Baltic empire, each received their city charters. These included charters for cities such as Rostock and Wismar, whose charters were granted by the lords of Mecklenburg in the years 1218 and 1228 respectively, and Danzig and Stralsund, which received their charters in about 1224 and 1234. In addition, new offices/branches of German merchants were established or sprang up besides existing trading settlements, as, for example, were the case in Stettin.

This arrangement continued without conflict until 1220 when Waldemar attempted to force the submission of Livonia and in the process threatened the interests of the merchants and the Bishop of Riga. Ultimately, the era of

103 Blomkvist rightfully points to this, *Discovery*, 700.

104 N.G. Heine, "Valdemar II.s Udenrigspolitik. Kampen am Østersøvaeldet," in *Østersøproblemer omkring 1200*, Humanistiske Studier II. Instituts arbejder fra Aarhus Universitet (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget Munksgaard, 1941), 9–85.

105 Additionally as members oft he Danish realm the Lübeck merchants benefited from the Danish privileges in England; see Jahnke, "Homines imperii," 13–18.

princely protection for the Low German merchants came to an end with the termination of Waldemar's rule of North Elbia (1223) and of the south Baltic coast (1227). As a result, Lübeck became a free Imperial City, and all of the cities had to handle the essential elements of the princely protectorate on their own. The development of the latter was inevitable, for none of the north German princes had sufficient power to administer the region and the Emperor was too far away to bear any significant influence upon the North (a condition which only deteriorated with the imperial struggle against the pontificate which intensified beginning in 1239). At that point, those Low German cities not within the dominion of the Danish Kings, which had constantly faced uncertain times ever since the dethronement of Henry the Lion in 1180/81, had now far more to administer, with what were, at the time, still largely insufficient municipal resources.[106]

However, the mission to Livonia had brought the merchants of the early Hanse, and especially the city of Lübeck, a powerful new ally: the Pope. In principle, the mission to Livonia was, at that time, in a state of tension between the archbishopric of Lund, which in the early 1170s had presented the Pope with the initial plans for the proselytizing of Estonia, and the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen, which had been active in Livonia since the 1180s when the missionary Meinhard had arrived at the Duna Delta aboard the ships of the Low German merchants (it was at the Duna Delta that the Bishopric of Riga was founded in 1201). For the crusaders who were to protect the Bishopric of Riga and then spread the Christian faith from it, Lübeck was the main port for the reception of supplies. Thus it was that the city attracted the political attention of papacy and subsequently became factored into their official policy for the Baltic region.[107] It was in this context that Pope Gregor IX forced King Waldemar II of Denmark to lift his blockade on the port of Lübeck in 1234. To accomplish this, Gregor threatened to grant the Livonian bound crusaders, who had already assembled in and, in turn, been prevented from leaving Lübeck by Waldemar's blockade, permission to forcefully end the blockade with military power, which meant war against a Christian king.[108] Good relations between the city council of Lübeck and the Curia, though at times fraught

106 Stuart Jenks, "Die Welfen, Lübeck und die werdende Hanse," in *Die Welfen und ihr Braunschweiger Hof im hohen Mittelalter*, ed. Bernd Schneidmüller (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz-Verlag, 1995), 483–522, 491f.

107 Fonnesberg-Schmidt, *The Popes*; Rainer Herrmann, "Lübeck und die Päpste (1201–1267)," *ZVLGA* 75 (1995) 9–52.

108 *Diplomatarium Danicum*, ed. Niels Skyum-Nielsen et al., København, 1/6, No. 183; Carsten Selch Jensen, "Urban Life and the Crusades in North Germany and the Baltic Lands in the

with problems, eventually led to a situation beginning in 1254, in which Lübeck received regular papal guarantees of its imperial privileges following the termination of imperial protection.[109]

A New Era: The Beginning for the Cities

In the late 1220s a new era featuring the cities as the protectors of the merchants began. To some extent, this era also marked the beginning of the Hanse as an urban organization. However, it would be a few more years until this fact would be documented and thus, visible for posterity. This development had already begun in the time of the traveling merchant companies, which, at that point, succinctly demonstrated their capabilities with the Treaty of Smolensk in 1229. All in all, the municipal protection of merchants and the political actions of the merchant traveling companies occurred simultaneously and served to complement each other.

When the protection of the sovereign ceased, the merchants and the cities developed various strategies (depending on time and location) in order to obtain trading privileges (charters and privileges) abroad.[110] These trading privileges/charters can be divided into three groups. First, there were those privileges jointly obtained by representatives of the *gemene kopman*. Second, there were those that had come about through the initiative of Lübeck and which applied to all Low German merchants. And finally, there were those of individual towns, which, while possibly becoming a fourth group designation, often provided an incentive for other cities to obtain the same, or at least similar, privileges.

These 'foreign treaties' were complemented by the treaties concluded between cities within the Empire; these inter-city treaties served to create an environment of political cooperation, especially when it came to the security of highways and the realization of mutual legal claims. The conclusion of such treaties also makes apparent the close cooperation of the merchants and the urban councilmen; and one may assume that members of the urban elite filled leading positions with long distance traders. In fact, and in spite of the absence of definitive proof from the sources, the aldermen of the merchant unions may have been recruited from members of the urban elite as well.

Early Thirteenth Century," in Alan V. Murray, ed., *Crusade and Conversion on the Baltic Frontier 1150–1500* (Aldershot et al.: Ashgate, 2001), 75–94, 82f.

109 Herrmann, "Lübeck," 44–52.

110 For the following see Jenks, "Welfen," 507–522.

From the privileges jointly obtained by the merchants, one can conclude that the people of Lübeck were continually advancing into the foreground of privileged Hanse cities. In treaties concluded until the mid-thirteenth century, Lübeck and her citizens were only mentioned next to the representatives of the other cities, and never first (1229 Smolensk and 1237 England). Beginning in the second half of the century, Lübeck almost always appeared at the top of such lists (1252 Sweden, 1259/60 and 1269 Novgorod).[111]

When it came to the second category of charters, those that applied to all merchants and which had come about due to Lübeck's initiative, the city of Lübeck served as the acting institution. In contrast to the privileges of the first group of charters, these did not serve local trade traffic within the foreign branches, but primarily served to secure and pacify the routes bound for foreign trading places as well as to reduce or waive the customs on these routes. Such charters occur until the late thirteenth century, and were, for the most part concluded with persons of a clerical rank (Archbishop of Livonia, Estonia and Prussia, the Bishops of Courland and Oesel, the Livonian master of the order, Cardinal, priest and Legate Guido, and many others) and primarily served to secure the sea route to Riga and Novgorod.[112]

The possible fourth group, after the individual city charters, comprised the so-called 'privileges by union' or 'unified privileges.' Almost everywhere, Lübeck was the first of the future Hanseatic Cities to obtain certain privileges for their own merchants, and this when considering the entire trading region of the Hanse: a region that included Scandinavia and the area along the entire East-West route from Livonia via Pomerania and Mecklenburg to England, Holland and Brabant. The desire of other cities to obtain identical rights resulted in a new phenomenon: privileges by union. In fact, the (granted) privileges of this group began with King Erich IV's transference of rights from the merchants of Cologne to the merchants of Soest (in Denmark) in 1232, but it is interesting that, in 17 of 23 subsequent charters issued from that time until 1298, Lübeck was listed as the first transferee.[113]

The mid-thirteenth century privileges of Flanders present a special case. These privileges were negotiated by a town councilman of Lübeck named

111 Antjekathrin Graßmann, Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, "Lübeck," in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 5 (München et al.: Artemis, 1991), 2146–2150.

112 HUB 1, No. 243 (1232) until *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Lübeck*, ed. Verein für Lübeckische Geschichte, vol. 1 (Osnabrück: H. Th. Wenner, 1976; New printing of the 1843 edition) [in the following: UBStL 1], No. 637 (1295); Jenks, "Welfen," 515f.

113 Jenks, "Welfen," Appendix 1, 521f; in two cases, Lübeck, together with the *ceteri civitatis Sclavie et maritime*, the Wendish cities, acquired the first charter.

Hermann Hoyer, who was later joined by in the negotiations by Jordan Boizenburg of Hamburg. Both were *nuncii speciales* and endowed with charters from several cities (Cologne, Dortmund, Soest, Munster, Aachen [which did not become a member of the eventual Hanseatic League]) authorizing the use of full executive powers for the negotiations. However, they eventually obtained privileges, which applied to all merchants within the Empire (*mercatores imperii*). Therefore it was, about the middle of the thirteenth century, that the cities in the developed portions of Western Europe had taken the place of merchant unions with special emissaries, who were accredited by the city to negotiate contracts with the Princes of the East (i.e. Novgorod). These emissaries would operate for approximately another 100 years.

However, the privileges of Flanders were ultimately the result of a defeat in trade politics on the part of the early Hanse's town emissaries. Their original objective had been to found a Low German merchant town, which they would call New-Damme, near Bruges. This was planned in order to expand the policy of city founding, which was so successful in the Baltic Region and, simultaneously, so dependent upon the demands of long distance trade, to the West. New-Damme was to serve as an emporium in the West with the transit trade being forbidden to residents. In this way, its function would be similar to Lübeck (East-West transshipment) and Visby (transshipment to the east of the Baltic) and adhere to a similar agenda for the practice of transshipment.[114] But, the project failed about the same time that an additional attempt to jointly found a city in Sambia with the aid of the German Order had failed. That city was to have been established in accordance with the Law of Riga, which was, more or less, akin to being established in accordance with merchant law. Presumably, the elite of the early Hanse concluded from the two cases, that the foundation of cities in accordance with general merchant laws would not have been any more feasible particularly in territorially well-organized areas. Moreover, around the middle of the thirteenth century, all of the potential localities available for the development of new cities had already been taken: Konigsberg was founded in 1255 as the last of more significant (later) Hanse cities.

Simultaneous to the era of gaining shared privileges abroad by means of the above-mentioned initiators, the Low German cities concluded numerous treaties that primarily constituted agreements between cities. On the one hand, this was done in order to ensure the greatest possible safety for merchants engaged

114 Klaus Friedland, *Die Hanse*, Urban-Taschenbücher, vol. 409 (Stuttgart et al.: Kohlhammer, 1991), 123f.; Klaus Friedland, "Die Kaufmannsstadt," in Eckhard Müller-Mertens and Heidelore Böcker, ed., *Konzeptionelle Ansätze der Hanse-Historiographie*, Hansische Studien XIV (Trier: Porta Alba Verlag, 2003), 141–154.

in travels upon the land or the sea. Such treaties often included the noble sovereigns. On the other hand, they were intended to create common municipal laws in the spirit of a continuing development of the old merchant right. Originally, there were bilateral agreements, as, for example, those sealed between Lübeck and Hamburg in 1241 or between Munster and Osnabruck. These bilateral agreements were soon complemented or completely replaced by regional groups. For example, the agreements between Munter and Osnabruck were replaced in 1246 upon the conclusion of the Alliance of Ladbergen. This alliance included a regional group comprising the Westphalian cities of Munster, Osnabruck, Minden, Coesfeld and Herford. Another such group was created by the City Alliance of Werne in 1253 and included Dortmund, Soest, Munster and Lippstadt.[115] In Lower Saxony, Munden and Northeim also came together to form a treaty in 1246, which became, as it were, the first precursor of the Lower Saxon Alliance of Cities. This alliance would come to include up to 15 cities under the leadership of Braunschweig.[116] In these covenants and treaties, one can recognize for the first time, the particular regions, which constituted the Hanse. These regions included cities in the Zuijdersee, Westphalian, Lower Saxon, Wendish, Prussian and Livonian areas. However, throughout the Hanse, regional and individual municipal interests were far older than the Hanse itself and as a result often super-ceded certain specific interests of the Hanse. It was, therefore, often a difficult process, which initially led to joint trading within the individual regions and, eventually, supra-regionally.

Due to their competition with one another, the Wendish cities had a particularly difficult time coming together. The subsequent core group of the Hanse, including Lübeck and Hamburg, had worked closely together since 1241,[117] but only in 1259 did the Baltic cities of Lübeck, Wismar and Rostock conclude a treaty for the protection of seafaring, which in 1265 was extended to include, among other things, the decision to council together annually about common affairs. Stralsund, which was besieged and partially destroyed by Lübeck in

115 Eva-Marie Distler, *Städtebünde im deutschen Spätmittelalter. Eine rechtshistorische Untersuchung zu Begriff, Verfassung und Funktion* [Studien zur europäischen Rechtsgeschichte; vol. 207] (Frankfurt/Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2006).

116 Johannes Schildhauer and Konrad Fritze and Walter Stark, *Die Hanse* (Berlin: VEB Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften 1974), 76f; Matthias Puhle, "Der sächsische Städtebund und die Hanse im späten Mittelalter", in *Hansische Geschichtsblätter* 104 (1986), 21–34, 21f.

117 Not 1230! See further Klaus Wriedt, "Die ältesten Vereinbarungen zwischen Hamburg und Lübeck," in *Civitatum communitas. Studien zum europäischen Städtewesen. Festschrift Heinz Stoob zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Helmut Jäger et al., Städteforschung A/21 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1984), 756–764; Jenks, "Welfen," 507–513.

1249, most probably because of their competition for the herring grounds near Rugen, and Greifswald only joined this union of cities in 1281 and only after Greifswald had mediated in the dispute between Lübeck and Stralsund.[118]

Therefore, one may not overestimate the effectiveness of these treaties. They were agreements to bear both military and financial burdens jointly. And yet, the most concrete problems associated with cooperating in order to restore the order of peace remained unsolved. Each city had to personally ensure that the land and sea routes would be free of robbers and pirates.[119]

However, the aforementioned treaties do document the dynamics with which the cities had to contend in their struggle against "peaceless" conditions. These dynamics soon caused the cities to abandon the regional setting for their original treaties. In 1280, Lübeck and the German municipality of Visby sealed a treaty, which Riga also joined in 1282, for the protection of trade traffic "between the Oeresund and Novgorod, or across the entire Baltic and in all of its ports".[120] Thus, the sea routes most central to the Baltic Region, which had previously been controlled by the kings of Denmark and Sweden, as well as the rulers of the Russian principalities, were, for the first time, placed under municipal protection and control; and even though there would be another setback during the early fourteenth century, this development and the process associated with it was a promising prospect.

In some cases, strategies for securing land and sea routes were carried out in cooperation with princes and noblemen. In the year 1283, the Treaty of Rostock, which was concluded for the purpose of upholding the peace on land and sea, numbered, among others included in the treaty, the Dukes of Saxony and Pomerania, the Prince of Rugen, the Lords of Mecklenburg and eight named Wendish cities (low German cities situated on the southwestern Baltic coast where historically Wends—Slavonic people lived) that were also joined by Hamburg, Kiel and Stettin.[121] In one case, the leader of the alliance, the Duke of Saxony, intervened with the King of England on behalf of the seaside towns engaged in a dispute with the Norwegian king and attempted to include England itself in the trade blockade against Norway.[122] Meanwhile,

118 Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, "Wismar und die Hanse—Der Dreistädtevertrag von 1259," in Kathrin Orth and Eberhard Kliem, eds., *Jahrbuch 2011 der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Schiffahrts- und Marinegeschichte e. V.*, 14. Jg., 2011 (Wismar: Isensee-Verlag Oldenburg 2011), 24–36.

119 Mohrmann, *Landfriede*, 35–38.

120 HUB 1, No. 863, 906.

121 HUB 1, No. 917 and 954; Mohrmann, *Landfriede*, 50–84.

122 HUB 1, No. 967.

the seaside towns had already been able to obtain just such a pledge from the King of Denmark.[123] Thus, with the treaty of the Wendish cities (1280s), we are already encountering within the eastern region of the Hanse a treaty of peace and security, which included both princes and rulers and served as the basis for an active policy of blockade against Norway intended for the realization of their economic interests. These economic interests also drew Denmark into the alliance (and tried to do so with England).[124] The Treaty of Rostock concluded for peace on land and at sea, already exhibited structural characteristics similar to those common in the Confederation of Cologne during the period from 1367–1385. These structural characteristics included the (later) Hanse cities as central to the treaty, close connections and arrangements with both princes and noblemen, and joint sanctions carried out by the members to enforce their political trade goals.

More than a decade before, the cities and merchants in the Eastern Hanseatic trade region, as they had in the West, had begun to rally together for joint actions intended to enforce their various trade interests. In 1268 and 1277/78 they declared trade blockades against Novgorod,[125] and in the 1280's they, together with the Spaniards, realized their interests against the City of Bruges by removing the emporium to Aardenburg (1280–1282) until the privileges they desired had been affirmed.[126] In 1284, the aforementioned blockade of Norway occurred and in conjunction with it, the first case of 'Hansification' (Verhansung) when Bremen merchants were prohibited from further trade with the seaside towns.[127] Letters from Kampen and Zwolle delivered to Lübeck in the year 1294 attest to the fact that trade competitors, such as the Frisians and the Flemish, were prevented, presumably by force, from trading in the Baltic Region, while Gotlandish merchants were barred from trading in the Western Sea (i.e.—the North Sea).[128] Furthermore, in 1282, the individual town Hanses of merchants from Cologne, or the Rhineland, Lübeck and Hamburg, had formed a *Hanse Alman(ie)* in London. Presumably, this was more a response to the pressure from the London city government and the English king than an act of voluntary accord. However, the rivaling groups of

123 HUB 1, No. 956.

124 HUB 1, No. 954.

125 HUB 1, No. 655, 656, 816.

126 HR I, 1, No. 12–27, 8–15.

127 HR I, 1, 16f., no. 34, 20f.

128 HUB 1, no. 1154, 1155.

German merchants in London merely formed a union; a complete fusion only came about during the fifteenth century.[129]

A few years later, the resolution of the cities already features those characteristics so typical of the institutionalized federation of the *stede van der dudeschen hense*. A 1305 invitation from Lübeck to Osnabruck contained precisely those three statements, which, since the late fourteenth century, had always had to appear within a letter of invitation Hanseatic Diets (contemporarily called *tagfahrten*). This enabled *vulmechtig* [authorized] emissaries of the urban council to participate in the deliberations. These statements addressed: 1. the affair(s) to be decided on the *tagfahrte*, 2. the date for the *tagfahrte*, and 3. the call to send authorized emissaries to the rendezvous.[130] In other words, from the turn of the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries, the Hanse cities had already achieved a degree of organization comparable to that achieved following the consolidation of the organizational structure into *steden van der dudeschen hense*.

In light of the successful joint trade conducted by the cities, Lübeck was victorious in the feud it had had with Visby regarding the predominance of the *gemenen stede* within the alliance during the last decade of the thirteenth century. Visby styled itself the representative for the *gemene kopman*, whose headquarters were in their city and whose rights the city defended (*ius illud quod* [...] *a mercatoribus in Godlandia observatur*; the law, which is applied by the merchants of Gotland). Lübeck, on the other hand, viewed itself as speaker for the town councils (city governments) of those Low German cities whose merchants participated in the joint foreign trade of the *gemenen kopmans*. In the 1290s, the city council of Lübeck tried to eliminate Visby from the competition for dominance over the union of the *gemenen stede* in the Baltic Region. They did so by trying move the high court (appellate court), designed for travelers journeying along the way from Visby to Novgorod, to Lübeck (1293–95) and by successfully abolishing the seal of the common merchants of Gotland (1299).

In one case, which already shows the typical characteristics of traditional decision-making, which were more heavily documented starting with the second half of the fourteenth century, cities interested in the trade with Novgorod, were asked by representatives of the Wendish cities to give their consent to the relocation of Novgorod's trade court jurisdiction from Visby to Lübeck.

129 Dollinger, *Hanse*, 61f; Nils Jörn, "With money and bloode," *Der Londoner Stalhof im Spannungsfeld der englisch-hansischen Beziehungen im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*. Quellen und Darstellungen zur hansischen Geschichte, N.F., vol. 50 (Cologne: Böhlau 2000).

130 HR I, 1, no. 82, 43f.

Lübeck argued that this corresponded with the reinstitution of the old law. Only a few cities (Riga and Osnabruck are known) ever refused their consent to this action by the Wendish cities. Those that did, raised the issue that at the Court of Novgorod, those *libertates* had always been effective that had been kept by the 'common merchant' of Gotland for the longest time.[131] Lübeck did not succeed. In the 14th century the appellate court took place by annual turns in Visby and Lübeck, a classic compromise.

The prohibition on the further use of the common merchant's seal is even more revealing of the stance taken against Visby. The city is not addressed by name, but the decision clearly stated that the seal of the common merchants was never to be used again on Gotland. This prohibition was justified by the rational that other cities did not have this chance, and by the consideration that each city had its own seal with which to affix its stamp upon the affairs of its merchants.[132] This withdrawal of a centralized legal means for authentication within a particular city corresponds to the legal constitution for the alliance of those cities, which were unwilling to permit that something that they had not unanimously consented to, should receive a seal of approval in the name of them all.

Consequently, in the period from the turn of the thirteenth until the fourteenth century, the alliance of the *gemene stede* had developed the organizational criteria necessary to enable the alliance to create the institutionalized form of the *dudesche hense* about a half-century later. The economic and political turbulence in the first decade of the fourteenth century, which brought the majority of the Hanse's core members, the Wendish cities, under the sovereignty of the noble lords and in turn limited the foreign and economic political autonomy of these cities, was at fault for this delay. After all, throughout the first two decades of the fourteenth century, the Wendish federation of towns, which constituted the most active of the regional Low German federations involved in the affairs of the early Hanse, was thrown back and temporarily subjected by the renewed Danish aggression under King Erich Menved (1286–1319) and by a form of the princely politic of re-vindication employed by the sovereigns of the southwest Baltic coast. In 1306, Lübeck was forced to seek protection from the Danish King in its struggle against neighboring princes (no help came from the partners in the treaty that was extended in 1296 and included Wismar, Rostock, Stralsund and Griefswald). Furthermore, Lübeck was obliged to pledge its support to the transfer of the city, by any means

131 HR I, 1, no. 66–69; regarding Riga and Osnabrück no. 70–72; whether the transfer of jurisdiction to Lübeck ever took place is questionable; see also no. 80, 41f.

132 HR I, 1, no. 80, 41f.

necessary, to Erich Menved. This pledge stood in total contradiction to Lübeck's status as a free imperial city and the privileges of the Empire, which had been obtained in 1226. In 1311, Wismar was conquered by its sovereign; in 1313 Rostock fell to the Prince of Mecklenburg due to the treachery of certain urban elites; and in 1314, Stralsund, in a newly negotiated treaty with the Prince of Rugen, was forced to make heavy payments and to disclaim certain privileges and the unlimited right to form alliances. A turn around began in 1316 when Stralsund triumphantly survived a siege lasting several months and supposedly used the ransom obtained for the captured Duke Erik of Saxony, to erect the splendid display located on the wall of the town hall.[133] The financial resources held by the coalition of princes were exhausted; and when Erich Menved and his rival, the Margrave Waldemar of Brandenburg, died in 1319, the cities were once again able to pursue their own political agendas, which had been interrupted for about 15 years.

The Development of the *Kontor* Association

From the turn of the thirteenth and until the fourteenth century, there were numerous groups of Low German merchants located within the countries targeted by the Hanse trade; these were primarily in the form of individual town guilds. Permanent offices did not yet exist, with the exception of the *gildhalla* in London. This was either because the stay of the merchants in certain areas was still temporally limited, as in Novgorod where there were 'summer-seaters' and 'winter-seaters' using the facilities for about four to six months at a time, or because the Low German merchants still maintained no right to assemble, as was the case in Flanders and Norway. At times, the 'governments' of the host countries comprehensively designated the individual groups as an "entity of merchants from the Empire". On the one hand, this designation would have corresponded to their de *jure*, outdated status as royal merchants. On the other hand, the designation would have corresponded to their constitutional form of organization as a free union of numerous associations for individual towns and regions.

Joint privileges for all local Low German merchants only existed in Novgorod (where the Gutnish merchants were also included) and were subject

133 Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, "Hansestädte im Städtelob der frühen Neuzeit," in Roman Czaja, ed., *Das Bild und die Wahrnehmung der Stadt und der städtischen Gesellschaft im Hanseraum im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2004), 19–55, 45.

to a single execution for all participants. These joint privileges were also available in Flanders, but were subject to multiple executions for various recipients. Until the end of the century, the oft-quoted "Hanseatic" privileges in England applied only to merchants of the *gildhalla* in London and co-existed alongside privileges for individual cities; privileges which continued to exist and were constantly renewed. Privileges for the individual cities were also the rule in the Scandinavian Empires and along the south Baltic coast.

One way in which Lübeck influenced Peter's Court in Novgorod, a city to which merchants were still sailing in traveling associations, was the great impact it had on the *schra*, the rules of Peter's Court, since the late 13th century. In Bergen, a fledgling community of German merchants was ruled by the Law of Lübeck: a great accomplishment for the people of Lübeck. The same situation applied to Schonen, where the Baltic cities were granted the Law of Lübeck as part of their privileges. However, while the Baltic of the early fourteenth century was, in this regard, dominated by Lübeck,[134] the branches in the West gained an ever-growing measure of independence. In Bruges and in Flanders, the Low German merchants obtained, among other provisions included within the First Common Privilege of 1309, the right to assemble, which right lent additional force to their joint appearance. But the considerably differentiated and firmly established legal system of the West had definitely hindered the development of a common merchant law similar to that, which had developed in the "Wild East". Accordingly, merchants also took to settling their disputes with reference to the laws of their respective hometown. For this reason alone, it is reasonable to assume that the influence of Lübeck could not have been as strong in the Baltic Region.

It is the sign of a progressive institutionalization, that, during the first half of the fourteenth century, permanent *kontor*-communities were established even in the foreign branches of Bruges and Bergen. It is also a sign that the term *dudesche hense* (1358), was employed by the common cities in order to describe themselves. Novgorod had already granted the merchants their right to assemble, if temporarily limited for respective individual traveling groups, between the turn of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries. The master of the guild in Novgorod was also authorized to exercise the high jurisdiction, which for other "hanseatic" branches was executed by a court in the host country. In Bergen, the Germans' right to assemble was ensured by an affirmation of privileges issued by the king in the year 1343. In Bruges, the

134 This Lübeck-centered interpretation in been increasingly discussed; see Wubs-Mrocewicz and Jenks, *Hanse, passim*; Jahnke, *Hanse, passim.*

Low German merchants had received a similar affirmation in 1309. The *kontor*, which, at first, was the only one of the big four not to have its own building (the merchants assembled in the refectory of the Carmelite monastery), set the rules in 1347. This, in turn, resulted in the 1356 intervention by emissaries of the council for the *gemene stede*. The preparatory meeting for the council emissaries in Lübeck is considered to mark the seminal event in the First Day (Founding Day) for the Hanseatic League.

Thus, one cannot draw a mono-casual portrait for the 'advance' of the merchants and cities of the Hanse. For each targeted area in the economic territory of the Hanse, individual factors determining economic and political actions must be identified on the basis of development within the individual Hanse regions and cities (which, however, did not make continuous progress in any one direction throughout the three discussed centuries). The result seems, most often, to indicate specific purposeful actions, which drove development. Ultimately, it was very much the exploitation of both bigger and smaller opportunities, interrupted by or connected to a number of failed ventures, that elevated the Low German merchants and their cities to a leading position, which, around the mid-fourteenth century, they defended by means of the "*hense van den dudeschen steden.*"