

DIE PERSÖNLICHEN HANDELSRECHNUNGEN DES PREUSSISCHEN KAUFMANNS JOHANNES PLIGE (1391–1399)

von Cordula A. Franzke

Abstract: The private account book of the Prussian merchant Johannes Plige.

Johannes Plige was a merchant who served as an authorized capable merchant (*Lieger*) for the Teutonic Order at Bruges from 1391 until 1399. At the same period he also traded for other merchants privately. These merchants sent him wax, fur, fish, lead, copper and ash and he sent them textiles, ginger and oil as return cargo.

This essay focusses on the person of Johannes Plige, on his private trade, on the commodities traded and their value and volume, on the resulting reinvestments and on the time needed to sell the incoming and buy the outgoing commodities. The merchant's marks are listed as well. Interestingly, it seems that he traded on the principle of mutuality (*Fernhandelsgesellschaft auf Gegenseitigkeit*). There are no indications that he charged his principals any fees for his services.

BERMUDADREIECK NORDSEE: DREI HAMBURGER SCHIFFE

AUF DEM WEG NACH LONDON

von Angela Huang und Carsten Jahnke

Abstract: The North Sea – A Bermuda Triangle? Hanseatic Trade between Hamburg and London in 1481

Our knowledge of trade routes and commercial shipping in the Late Middle Ages depends significantly on the home port and destinations that are registered in toll books and customs accounts of major ports of export such as Lübeck, Hamburg or London. These accounts differ significantly from each other. Whereas the Hanseatic accounts provide fragmentary evidence on skippers, merchants, commodities, and origin or destination of the ship, the customs accounts of London have often been praised for their detailed information. This article makes use of both types of customs accounts as it analyzes three parallel entries in the custom year 1480/81. The results show that – used together – both sources can provide new insights into trade in the North Sea and beyond.

In 1480/81, three ships left the port of Hamburg and would eventually arrive in London: Two skippers, Hinrik Kaster and Caspar Boke, were registered in Hamburg with England as their destination. Around six weeks later they appear in the customs accounts of London. A third skipper, Hans Hagen, declared Amsterdam as his destination – but arrived in London more than three month after departure from Hamburg. Especially the journey of this third skipper Hans Hagen arouses the liveliest of suspicions. This is substantiated when one looks at the commodities declared in Hamburg and London. There are noticeable changes not only in the quantity of goods but also in the composition of goods altogether (see tables 1–3). This cannot be due to the tax systems as the goods in question were liable to duty in both ports.

The three examples presented in this article – supported by other fifteenth-century sources – do not support the view that direct trade was predominant between Hamburg and London. They highlight a triangular trade. Hanseatic merchants seem to have carried out their trade to England via Dutch markets, above all Amsterdam and Middelburg. Amsterdam linked the Netherlands to the Baltic via the Sound, whereas Middelburg's importance derived from the overseas trade of the Mercer's Company of London that was concentrated here since the late 14th century. A stopover at one of these markets is most certainly true for the ships of Kaster and Boke. Hans Haghens ship on the other hand did indeed sail to Amsterdam – at first. But afterwards he must have sailed on to the Antwerp fair and thereafter finally to London. Altogether, the markets and fairs of the Netherlands were a frequent stopover in Hanseatic trade to London and vice versa.

In addition, the comparison shows that Hanseatic merchants in Lübeck and London could rely on an elaborate factor-system. Their representatives in Hamburg would take charge of the cargo between Hamburg and the Netherlands; most likely a second group of representatives there would take over and would transfer the goods safely to the consignee in London (see graph 6).

Last but not least, the London Particular of Account provide us with further information on the cargo listed in the Hanseatic Pound Toll Books. Among other things, they provide specifics about the unnamed textiles that were registered in Hamburg; we learn that these were most likely mainly Saxon brands, supplemented by the undefined pechtling (see tables 7–9). Furthermore, the English records give us details on how and in which quantities textiles were exported from Hamburg (see table 10).

DIE HANSE AUF DEM WEG ZUM STÄDTEBUND: HANSISCHE REORGANISATIONSBESTREBUNGEN AN DER WENDE VOM 15. ZUM 16. JAHRHUNDERT*

von Maria Seier

Abstract: The Hanse on the path to federation: Reorganizing the Hanse on the cusp of the 16th century

In 1494 the Hanseatic Diet approved a draft of a new defensive alliance which contained a schedule detailing the military and/or financial contribution of each town (Tohopesate). This schedule proved to be the starting point for recurrent discussions in the Diet between 1494 and 1518 about the status of individual Hanseatic cities. Contrary to previous practice, the Hanse reached a definitive decision on the status of individual cities. As a result eleven cities were excluded from the Hanse in 1518. Some of those remaining were relegated to second-class status, retaining the right to use Hanseatic privileges overseas but losing their right to attend the Diet. Closer examination shows that in the edition of this schedule in the Hanserezesse, the numerous additions and emendations were banished to the text-critical apparatus. They are, however, important, since they show that the register was in fact a correct and current list of all active Hanseatic towns. On the cusp of the 16th century, Hanseatic membership was not decided in the overseas counters, but in the Diet. This regulation of the Hanseatic membership was accompanied by efforts to organize the Hanse more tightly. Among the ideas touted were introducing an annual contribution, increasing the secrecy of confidential proceedings, introducing different classes of membership for larger and smaller towns and concluding a Tohopesate of all Hanseatic towns. All of these measures were aimed at restructuring the Hanse to form a closer union. As such, they were important steps on the way to the fundamental constitutional reform of the Hanse, which took place in the mid-16th century.

VON DER HANSE ZUR HANSEATISCHEN GEMEINSCHAFT.
DIE ENTSTEHUNG DER KONSULATSGEMEINSCHAFT VON
BREMEN, HAMBURG UND LÜBECK

von Magnus Ressel

Abstract: From the Hansa to the Hanseatic Community. The creation of the consular-system of Bremen, Hamburg and Lubeck.

The traditional chronology of the history of the „Hansa“ with rise (~ 1100 – 1300) – heyday (~ 1300 – 1500) – downfall (~ 1500 – 1630) is brought here under scrutiny. This view of the League is in many aspects historiographical baggage of the 19th century, which was much influenced by a Hegelian outlook on history and a nationalism that denounced the Early Modern Empire for having been too weak and decentralized to protect German interests. In contrast to this view it is argued that some far-reaching changes took place in the late 16th and early 17th century that changed the League fundamentally but did not bring about its end; ‘transition’ is the much more appropriate term. While the much belabored political changes are indubitably important, the structural transformation of the basic mechanisms of trade is even more significant. The old Kontor-system no longer fitted its environment since new types of commercial transactions and a new degree of competition in shipping profoundly altered the profitability of land- and water-routes.

Fundamentally, the League has always been a network-structure, whose purpose was to reduce transaction costs for its merchants and shippers *and* to retain political independence for its members. Thus it was profoundly affected by these secular changes. After 1570 the economic advantages of membership were in fact increasingly limited to the Wendish core-region of the Hansa, the coastal-cities there being the only ones with expanding shipping in need of protection and representation abroad. And indeed, it were mainly the cities of this region, which began to dispatch consuls, residents and other diplomatic representatives to a number of European countries after 1600. These were seen as more appropriate means to provide the required services to Hanseatic merchants than the Kontor-system, which they effectively replaced. Establishing and maintaining this network was costly, which is why in the long run only Bremen, Hamburg and Lubeck, these three being the only German cities which retained a respectable long-distance trade, continued to finance it.

It is not by chance that these same cities began some implicit de-facto-reforms of increased and more effective cooperation among themselves in the first decades of the 17th century, to the detriment of the diets (Hansetage), which lost real influence. The formation of a ‘Hanseatic Community’ within the Hansa with responsibility for a substantial diplomatic network ensured the maintenance of the traditions of the League by the three cities alone during the Thirty Years War (1618 – 48) and afterwards for more than two centuries. This dynamic network, mostly controlled by Hamburg, was quiet but effective. The leading politicians of the three cities were always very conscious of its value and saw this as most important proof that they really were the successors of the older League, which in their opinion had never ended. The three cities survived as independent urban republics until 1866 with remarkable economic success in connecting Germany to world trade. The effects of the consular-system upon this outcome have been underestimated, due to a general neglect of the ‘Hanseatic’ element in the decades from 1648 – 1866.

DIE NIEDERLÄNDISCHE GESCHICHTSSCHREIBUNG
ÜBER DIE HANSE*

von Job Weststrate

Abstract: The Hanseatic League in Dutch historiography.

This essay discusses the development of the historiography on the Hanseatic League in the Netherlands. The League has been a peripheral topic in Dutch pre-industrial socio-economic history, secondary to the economic rise of Holland in the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, a small but resilient output of Hanseatic studies developed within the Netherlands, starting with „De Nederlanden en het Hanseverbond“ by Frans Berg in 1833. He was heavily influenced by the studies of the German scholar Georg Sartorius. The German influence on Dutch Hanseatic history has been a constant feature of the historiography ever since.

The nineteenth century brought forth some publications, but Hanseatic history in the Netherlands only took off, modestly, from the 1910's onwards. Studies on individual Hanseatic towns (Groningen, Kampen, and Deventer) and their economic activities were written. Influential until the present day is the dissertation of P. A. Meilink (1912), who was the first after Berg to devote attention to the activities of Dutch Hanseatic towns as a whole.

Dutch Hanseatic history found its first institutional academic setting from 1961 to 1969, when W. J. Alberts held a chair at Utrecht University, committed to the historical relations between the Netherlands and Western Germany. Alberts and the scholars in his network published a myriad of source publications and studies on the Eastern Netherlands, including the Hanseatic League. Their methodological framework was the ‚Geschichtliche Landeskunde‘, given to the view that the Eastern Netherlands and Western Germany were one historical ‚Raum‘, inseparably bound by economic, political and cultural ties.

* Mein herzlicher Dank gilt Dr. Rolf Dreier und der Redaktion der Hansischen Geschichtsblätter, insbesondere Herrn Dr. Volker Henn, für die sprachliche Überarbeitung des Textes. Ebenso danke ich Dr. Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, Dr. Hanno Brand, Prof. Dr. Dick de Boer, sowie den beiden anonymen Gutachtern, für ihre kritische Prüfung des Manuskriptes.

This dominant paradigm was not challenged until the 1990's, when scholars such as D. Seifert and V. Henn stressed the fluid character of Hanseatic membership and toned down the dominant image of strong antagonism between Holland and Hanse. In the Netherlands, these new ideas were partly disseminated in the urban histories on individual towns, that have been published on a large scale since the early 1990's. Some still nurture traditional ideas (Nijmegen), others include discussions on the nature of the League and the role of the individual towns within it (Amsterdam, Deventer, Arnhem).

Substantial new research, elaborating in part on these new views, has been carried out after the creation of the „Hanse Studie Centrum“ at Groningen University in 2002. Its members (D. de Boer, H. Brand, J. Wubs-Mrozewicz) studied several unexplored fields of Dutch Hanseatic history and enlarged its methodological scope by incorporating models and theories from non-German academic traditions. By bringing together scholars from several countries in Northern and Western Europe, the centre brought Dutch Hanseatic history within a wider context of North Sea and Baltic Studies. The results of the projects of the „Hanse Studie Centrum“ merit the conclusion that an institutional framework is essential for the fruitful continuation of Hanseatic studies in the Netherlands.

PAUL JOHANSEN (1901–1965),
HANSE- UND OSTEUROPAHISTORIKER

BEMERKUNGEN ZU EINER NEUEN PUBLIKATION

von Hugo Weczerka

Abstract: Paul Johansen (1901–1965), Historian of the Hanse and Eastern Europe. Remarks on a recent publication.

This article is intended to take issue with Frank Golczewski's „East European History in Hamburg“, published in a volume of essays entitled „100 Years of Historical Research in Hamburg“ (Rainer Nicolaysen, Axel Schildt [eds.], 100 Jahre Geschichtswissenschaft in Hamburg, Berlin and Hamburg 2011), and in particular with Golczewski's characterization of Prof. Paul Johansen, who held the chair for Hanseatic and East European history at the University of Hamburg from 1940/41 to his death in 1965.

After listing the many honours Johansen received, I sketch Johansen's biography, teaching and research. Born in Reval (now Tallinn/Estonia) and professionally active there as the town archivist, it was natural that Johansen should focus on the history of medieval Livonia – and particularly on Estonia and the town of Reval –, which played an important role in the history of the Hanse and of East Europe. The brunt of my article is to correct Golczewski's portrayal of Johansen's scholarly career, which I believe to be substantially wrong: in my view, Golczewski often has interpreted the sources, by turns, erroneously, imprecisely and tendentiously, so that in consequence he has construed a highly negative portrait of this scholar while ignoring a part of his important contributions to research.