

„... dat wie up dat gemelde kunthoer tho Brugge ... eyn kleyn  
upmercken gehat und noch hebben ...“.

NEUE FORSCHUNGEN ZUR GESCHICHTE DES  
BRÜGGER HANSEKONTORS\*

von Volker Henn

*Abstract:* The following essay gives a comprehensive survey of the studies on the history of the Hanseatic *Kontor* at Bruges published during the last 25 years approximately, in Germany as well as in other European countries. The report starts with the lectures given at a conference at Bruges hosted by *Hansischer Geschichtsverein* in 1988, the aim of which it was to document the state of research achieved at that time and to raise new questions. At greater length the results of the Kiel-Greifswald research project initiated by Werner Paravicini will be discussed. The starting point of the project was the rediscovery of customs accounts being preserved in the Bruges city archives. They include the names of more than 1800 Hanseatic merchants who had paid the excise duties on wine and beer during the years 1360 up to 1388. The analysis of this source by means of prosopographic methods has revealed a number of new insights into the business activities of the German merchants, their integration into the local society, the role of the Bruges hostellers and money changers, the organisation of the Hanseatic trade with Flanders or the network structure of the Hanse itself. It goes without saying that further publications dealing with the different aspects of the history of the *Kontor* and having been prepared irrespective of the said project will also be taken into consideration. However, since the choice of the subjects has been dependent of the authors' individual interests definite focuses of research cannot be traced. Finally some attention will be paid to the communities of other foreign merchants in Bruges, especially those from Italy and the Iberian Peninsula.

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\* Überarbeitete und erweiterte Fassung eines Vortrags, den ich auf der Pfingsttagung des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins in Wismar am 21.5.2013 gehalten habe. – Das im Titel verwendete Quellenzitat nach HR III, 6, 328 (1512). – Die im Folgenden in den Fußnoten in [...] genannten Zahlen verweisen auf die lfd. Nrn. der in der beigefügten Bibliographie (S. 31–45) aufgeführten Titel.

Though they were competitors on the one side, they were trading partners on the other side, having common interests in the face of the local authorities.

## DIE DISTRIBUTIONSREVOLUTION DES 15. JAHRHUNDERTS\*

von Stuart Jenks

### *Abstract:* The Distribution Revolution of the Fifteenth Century

The consumption revolution of the long eighteenth century (c. 1650–1850) was inconceivable without a prior distribution revolution in Northwest Europe, in the course of which markets were linked in a stable hierarchy reaching from the international fairs of Antwerp and Frankfurt down to humble packmen tramping from village to village. The exotic products of the consumption revolution did not have to surmount any significant distribution problems, because the networks had been functioning since the fifteenth century. The proof of this hypothesis is divided into two parts, one empirical and the other theoretical. The foundation of some 2000 weekly markets in England between 1200 and 1350 resulted from the interaction of peasants' cash requirements and improved transportation by horse: There was much money to be made by establishing markets, but peasants could choose between them. This set in train a brutal winnowing of markets which was intensified in the late middle ages by the effects of the plague, the enclosure movement and price-wage developments. In the end, the surviving markets had organized themselves into a hierarchy based on London, which was, by 1500, indisputably the center of foreign trade and the distribution of imports in England. This section concludes by showing that the hierarchization of markets was also characteristic of the Hanseatic area during the same period. The theoretical part of the paper demonstrates that the hierarchization of markets changed the framework for economic actors in a way no person or group could alter. Late medieval industrial mass production, succeeded by early modern proto-industrialization, required efficient labor markets and distribution networks. Placing the price signals generated by urban markets at the center of the argument solves a number of troubling problems of proto-industrialization: the geographical concentration of proto-industries, the outsourcing of simple tasks (and the retention of more sophisticated processes) and the

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subsequent urbanization of rural industrial clusters. It also allows us to go beyond Diamond and Krugman and construct a real-world model of the rise of market hierarchization, as traders exploited scale economies derived from the difference between urban wholesale and rural retail prices, and – by concentrating their trade on the most liquid provincial markets (thus maximizing thick market externalities) – locked these satellite markets into the hierarchy. An examination of the policies of the London Grocers and Mercers proves that this did, indeed, take place in the course of the fifteenth century. Therefore, the distribution revolution was a true revolution, one which changed forever the framework for economic actors in a way no person or group could alter (‘economic constitution’).

DIE ZEITGENÖSSISCHE PERZEPTION DES NIEDERGANGS DER  
HANSEKONTORE IN DEN „*Hanseatica*“ (1674) DES DANZIGER  
SYNDIKUS WENZEL MITTENDORP<sup>1</sup>

von Magnus Ressel

*Abstract:* The Decay of the Hanseatic Kontors in the „*Hanseatica*“ (1674) of the Danzig Syndic Wenzel Mittendorp

In the second half of the seventeenth century, no one could dispute the decay of the Hanse. Yet the ultimate dissolution of this once famous and powerful alliance of cities and towns was not inevitable. Influential politicians in the principal Hanse towns and cities endeavored valiantly throughout the seventeenth century to keep the league's members together. One of these pro-Hanse politicians was the Danzig Syndic Wenzel Mittendorp, a senator who had been active in the city for the better part of the first half of the seventeenth century. Around mid-century he wrote a manuscript of roughly 1000 pages, the „*Hanseatica*“ (‘Hanseatic affairs’), intended as a monument to his decades of service as a Hanse politician and containing his principal thoughts, ideas and arguments on and for the league. The manuscript is a unique source for historians since it gives us a detailed view on the perception of the forces of decay in the league. Moreover, since it is principally a historical account of the league, the manuscript can be judged to have been one of the first scholarly attempts to provide a coherent narrative of the league and thus to instill a sense of tradition into its readers. Regarding matters from the perspective of mid-seventeenth century Danzig, Mittendorp looked mostly at the Kontors and identified their tribulations as the root of the crisis of the Hanse. Originally based on the economic success of the Kontors, the league was now decaying parallel to their decline. Mittendorp's contribution was addressed

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<sup>1</sup> Der Artikel entstand aufgrund des Fundes des Manuskriptes „*Hanseatica*“ durch den Autor mit Hilfe von Frau Kathrin Enzel, der Geschäftsführerin der Stiftung Hanseatisches Wirtschaftsarchiv bei der Handelskammer Hamburg. Ihr, sowie den zwei anonymen Peer-Reviewern sei für die Hinweise und Mithilfe gedankt. Im Folgenden verwende ich den Plural, wenn ich von „den *Hanseatica*“ spreche, damit wird dem Originaltitel grammatikalisch Genüge getan. Lateinisch liegt hier ein Neutrum Plural vor, zu Deutsch lautete der Titel also am ehesten: „Hansesachen“.

to his fellow politicians in Danzig, in whom he wanted to inculcate a conviction of the value of continuing active membership in the Hanse; regardless of the problems of the Kontors. Tradition and advantages beyond the mere commercial constituted his principal arguments in favor of Danzig's continuing membership in the Hanse. Notwithstanding his ultimate failure to achieve this goal, Mittendorf's arguments give us an illuminating insight into the self-perception of the Hanse at one of its formerly principal centers at a time when the fundamental questions on the continuation or dissolution of the league forced its adherents to bring their most compelling arguments to the fore. The result was the „Hanseatica“, a unique source for any historian interested in the political mindset of Hanse politicians in the decades preceding the end of the league.

ARCHIVALIEN ZU DEN HANSEKONTOREN IM ARCHIV DER  
HANSESTADT WISMAR –  
VORSTELLUNG DES PROJEKTS EINES WENDISCHEN INVENTARS

von Nils Jörn

*Abstract:* The projected Calendar of Hanseatic Sources from the Wendish Quarter

The article presents a project, now in its inception, which aims to calendar archival material in Lübeck, Hamburg, Lüneburg, Wismar, Rostock, Stralsund and Greifswald dating from the period 1531 to 1668. It follows the example of the calendars of the sources in the archives of Cologne (1896/1903), Danzig (1913) and Braunschweig (forthcoming) in the same period and will close the gap, making the material for the fourth, Wendish quarter of the Hanse readily available. The article shows how wide-ranged the material in Wismar town archive is and makes proposals about how to structure the project and organise the material from the Wendish archives in a data base.

## WIE VERLÄSSLICH IST DAS ARTLENBURG-PRIVILEG ÜBERLIEFERT?

von Detlev Ellmers

*Abstract:* Henry the Lion's Artlenburg Charter (1161)

The Artlenburg Charter of 1161, only transmitted in later copies, is unquestionably the most hotly disputed document of the twelfth century. While one side views the charter as the founding document of the German Hanse, the other side focusses on the clauses inserted into the charter at a later date, which leads them to a completely different understanding of its significance. Among those in the latter group, Thomas Riis put forward the hypothesis that the Lübeck copy of the charter constitutes nothing less than an augmented version of the document with ‚improving‘ additions to the text which was produced around 1225 by the Lübeck canon Marold, which Lübeck presented to Emperor Fredrich II in 1226 – together with a number of other charters which Marold had ‚improved‘ – in order to obtain the document known to scholars as the ‚charter of imperial freedom‘ (1226). The critical examination of Riis's arguments demonstrates, however, that Lübeck never employed its copy of the Artlenburg charter to argue a point with an external authority, be it in 1226 or at any other subsequent time. This raises the question of why, and for whom, the copy was made. The town seal appended to the charter proves indubitably that it was executed on a mandate from the Lübeck town council. It was this body which ordered the Artlenburg charter (together with Henry the Lion's mandate to the advocate charged with governing the German merchants on Gotland) to be copied into Lübecks Codex of Privileges, which was reserved for confidential use by councillors and merchants. The copy of the charter served to inform them of the conditions under which a permanent, peaceful settlement of the conflicts between Germans and Gotlanders had been reached under the tutelage of Henry the Lion, a settlement which opened trade in the Baltic for merchants sailing from Lübeck. The purpose of the copy was to keep Lübeck's merchants precisely informed of each and every right they enjoyed (since these constituted the foundation of their trade), in order to be able to maintain those rights if

conflicts arose in the future. Any change to the original text would have been suicidal. Therefore, we can be confident that the text which the copy transmits corresponds to the (lost) original in each and every particular.