Hanseatic League,
1370
“The lust for buying and selling was strong in their blood, and, under the most fearful conditions of hardship and danger, they went their weary way over the ill-conditioned roads to convey their merchandise from place to place, braving the dangers of pillage and death at the hands of the various Barons and powerful dignitaries of the Church—for their holy calling did not make the latter any less eager for temporal riches.”

—Elizabeth Gee Nash, The Hansa: Its History and Romance
Dear Delegates,

It is with great excitement and pleasure that I welcome everyone to the Hanseatic League! My name is Bob Zhao. I am a sophomore studying Economics and Computer Science, and I will be directing the Hanseatic League committee over the course of the weekend. I’m originally from Memphis, Tennessee, and have been involved with Model UN since my freshman year of high school. After attending WUMUNS my freshman year, I was absolutely hooked, and it became the conference I most looked forward to every year afterward. I am so excited to relive one of my favorite parts of high school with you all and to explore this fascinating period of history throughout the three days of WUMUNS XI.

The Hanseatic League is one of the earliest and most important, yet least known, economic unions in European history, the influence of which can be seen in the trade confederations of Renaissance Italy, the rise of the German states in the late 1800s, and even the modern European Union. Many of the economic idiosyncrasies of the modern European system can be traced back to the formative years of the Hanseatic League, which, in addition to being an important economic collective in continental Europe, was an extremely influential political force in the pre-Reformation golden years of the Holy Roman Empire. I hope that through this simulation you will come to appreciate just how important the Hanseatic League was to the creation of the modern German state and how the league’s early republican organization helped influence its politics.

If any questions arise during your research, I would be more than happy to answer them by email at zhao.f@wustl.edu. I look forward to meeting you all and wish you the best of luck in your preparations!

Best wishes,

Bob Zhao
Contents

Committee Mandate................................................................. 5

Historical Background.......................................................... 6
Founding Period (Mid-1100s–1290).......................................... 6
Commercial (Post Charter)....................................................... 7
Golden Period........................................................................... 8
Mechanism of League Operations........................................... 9

Topic A: Political Influence and Relationship with the Holy Roman Empire.................................................. 11
Topic B: The Organization of League Operations in the Newly Acquired Nordic Countries......................... 13
Topic C: The Maintenance of League Order......................... 14

Delegate Positions................................................................. 15
Bibliography............................................................................. 24
Greetings, representatives!

The Hanseatic League, as it has recently become known, is a collection of city-states centered primarily in the core of the German heartland, with branches stretching from London in the west to Novgorod (now part of Russia and Finland) in the east. The league is Europe’s primary economic union: a body dedicated to facilitating trade across the entire continent. In this gathering of envoys during the 1370 Hansetag (Hanseatic diet), the league sits at an especially illustrious crossroads of its storied history. King Valdemar IV of Denmark and his son-in-law Haakon VI were recently crushed by a confederation of Hanseatic sailors, granting an effective monopoly to league merchants in several important Scandinavian markets. This gathering of representatives must decide how the league is to proceed from this point.

This victory over the Danish forces is the league’s most politically important military victory. The subsequent Treaty of Stralsund has demonstrated the potential political power of the league and begs a vital question: should the Hansa continue primarily as a trade collective, or should it harness its formidable military and economic resources to transition into an established political power in Europe? The precedent this body sets in Denmark following the Treaty of Stralsund will determine how the political elite in Europe will view the league henceforth. No super-national political organization has had the potential to generate comparable fiduciary, political, or martial resources since the Roman Empire. Should the league provide a unified political front in the newly acquired Nordic markets, the potential for profit is enormous. However, if the establishment of Hanseatic influence in these countries goes poorly or the kings of Europe begin to unite against league expansion in response to the league’s actions in Denmark, the rise of the league and many of the material blessings this body has enjoyed will evaporate quickly. It is up to this body to effectively conduct itself in a manner that effectively forwards its goals, whatever they might be.

Historical Background

Since the Norman Conquest, trade in England was connected to German cities in the lower Rhine, especially in Cologne.\(^2\) Trading in the region operated primarily via barges up and down several navigable rivers, the North Sea, and into the Baltic regions as far west as Novgorod, which was established as a trading post as early as 1080, and as far east as London, where the king of England granted special royal patronage specifically to German traders in 1157.\(^3\) Many German merchants in the eastern parts of Europe, especially from the Swedish province of Gotland in the Baltic Sea, were drawn to the bustling trading port of Novgorod, where the prince rewarded their productivity with special trading privileges. Similarly, in England, merchants from Dortmund and Cologne began as competitors before eventually resolving their differences and becoming one block of traders at the bequest of the English king.

The beginnings of the formal Hanseatic League can be traced back to the conquest of territory around Hamburg by the German city-state of Lübeck.

2. Thompson, *Economic and Social History*, 146.

led by Henry the Lion. As Lübeck began exerting its influence southward, the German trade relations that would later coalesce into the Hansa began to form. Cologne and Bremen, the other major political powers of the region, joined in 1260. This quartet of states would serve as the foundation of what would later be known as the Hansa and would come to gradually consolidate its influence over the region over the next several hundred years. The major trade nodes at the time flowed west into regions of France, north to England, and east to Russia, to each of which the early Hanseatic towns primarily sent furs and timber in exchange for finished goods and luxury items. Lübeck, situated near the coast of the Baltic Sea, quickly became the German center for Baltic trade. Working in close connection with the town of Visby in the Gotland county of Sweden, Hanseatic towns were able to access the Baltic markets farther east of Gotland, connecting for the first time the trade routes of Spain, France, and Portugal to markets north of Denmark. As Lübeck established itself as the center for Baltic trade, Hamburg and Bremen operated in the North Atlantic, relying on relations with England, Norway, Iceland, and Ireland established since Viking times. The Flemish town of Bruges (now part of Belgium) allowed merchants from Hamburg and Bremen to move trade goods from the center of Germany into London (from which trade flowed into other parts of England) and the western parts of Scandinavia.

The first appearance of the word Hanse appeared in documents as early as 1267. This German word for “guild” gradually became the term used to reference the entire German trading operation that was by now international in scope. The formal Hanseatic charter was not drafted until 1356, but many of the practices, customs, and beliefs of the league codified in 1356 had already been accepted and understood for decades. Each town raised their own levies, which were drawn from the cities’ guilds, and came together to defend one another. German traders, when approaching foreign governments such as those in London and Bruges, negotiated as one body. As time progressed, traders evolved from the peddlers that bought and sold their wares in market squares into merchant-entrepreneurs that contracted the physical buying and selling aspects of their business to local shopkeepers, with trusted ship captains and sailors acting as middlemen. The merchant profession gradually became one of corresponding

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5. London, tapping into its established cottage industry and manufacturing industry, exported finished cloths and linens in exchange for raw goods such as hemp, pitch, and timber, as well as agricultural commodities such as wheat, rye, and barley. Nash.


7. Schulte Beerbühl, “Networks of the Hanseatic League.”
and negotiating between and around trade agreements and laws of the various locales in which a merchant practiced business.\(^8\)

This evolution of the merchant business allowed many more towns to be incorporated into the Hansa’s circle of influence, in turn bringing a greater volume and variety of wares into the Hanseatic marketplace. By the 1360s, fifty-two towns were included in the formal Hanseatic charter, with many more informally associated towns accessing the benefits of the league’s influence. Trade among these towns became more robust, and merchants living on opposite sides of the league safely traded with one another under the protection their envoys enjoyed in each city along the way. Reputation became hugely important in the world of Hanseatic trading, and merchants soon introduced product expectations, measurement standards, personal liability, and debt claims to help facilitate and maintain business between merchants that perhaps had never met before. These institutions created a degree of trust in trading and a safe flow of trade goods that was completely unheard of since Roman times, making the league’s position extremely attractive to merchants in cities seeking membership or activity from Hanseatic merchants. Five major trade nodes (Visby-Lübeck, Cologne-Bremen-Hamburg, Bruges, London, and Novgorod) grew extremely wealthy from the league and came to dominate regional politics as a result.\(^9\)

**Golden Period**

As the league continued to grow and various German princes and merchants amassed sizable treasuries from league profits, the league and its leaders quickly became a major political power in the region. Nowhere was the league’s economic and political influence broadcast more fully than in Denmark.

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8. Schulte Beerbühl.

9. The league helped develop northern Germany, using the manufacturing sectors of London and Bruges to bring about German advancements in woodworking and metallurgy. The league primarily traded ashes, butter and lard, timber, furs, wheat, and other raw goods from the German and Baltic states into Flanders and England for cloth, hops, tin, and manufactured goods. Metal ore (principally copper and iron) and herring came from Sweden. From Bruges came cotton, tapestries, velvets, silks, and other clothing due to the city’s manufacturing prowess. Schulte Beerbühl.
in 1370.\textsuperscript{10} At the time, the Schleswig isthmus, which lay in between Lübeck and Hamburg, cut the league into its eastern and western halves.\textsuperscript{11} Furthermore, the king of Denmark at the time was particularly hostile to the Hansa’s expansion and effectively shut down the league’s operations in the region and cut off the its access to its eastern markets. The league met in Cologne and decided to wage war on Denmark. Levying its own fleet, the Confederation of Cologne sailed to Denmark in 1361.\textsuperscript{12} After nine years of war, the league sacked several major cities along the Danish coast, closing their ports, and now sits ready to negotiate the terms of surrender with the Norwegian king.

Several important factors that facilitate the flow of goods throughout the empire are worth noting to understand how the league operates. Most importantly, an extensive river system allows for the flow of goods throughout the continent, with many rivers emptying into the Baltic and North Seas that allow for further travel to England, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia.

Several rivers are worth noting here. The Volga, which flows from the Black Sea, facilitates trade from the Baltic states to Russia and then to the eastern parts of Prussia and Germany along the Vistula and Oder Rivers. These river systems constitute the eastern half of Hanseatic trade. In the west, the Rhone,

\textsuperscript{10} Gade, \textit{The Hanseatic Control}, 92.

\textsuperscript{11} This area was also an abundant source of cod, hake, flounder, and herring, which was the principal fish of the Middle Ages. Thompson, \textit{Economic and Social History}, 154.

\textsuperscript{12} Gade, \textit{The Hanseatic Control}, 90.
Rhine, and Danube Rivers allow for the flow of goods throughout the North Sea, connecting to London via the Thames. These two halves of the league are connected by the neck of the Danish peninsula, where Lübeck sits. Several major cities sit at other critical junctures of these river systems and can leverage the geographic situation to their advantage.

It is also important to understand the guilds that constitute the core of the league’s organizational structure. Primarily, guilds allow for guild members to petition for profits related to the specific practice their guild oversees, ensuring guild members can maintain a monopoly over the craft in which they specialize. To do this, guilds have an accreditation system, in which guildsmen are given apprentice, journeyman, or master status certifying their level of expertise and dedication to the guild’s mission. Merchant guilds in particular are powerful because they functionally control all the trade within a particular township, which often constitutes more than half of the economy of some townships. In addition to monopolizing trade, merchant guilds often establish towns in strategic locations along rivers or other navigable waterways by petitioning for and receiving charters from the emperor or prince that owns that piece of land. Even though merchant guilds are technically distinct entities from the public officials in many towns, the fact that merchants are so deeply integrated in a city’s economy and history—in addition to the fact that many merchants are wealthy and well-connected—suggests that merchant guilds in many towns have tremendous sway over regional politics. Merchant guilds also ensure the safe flow of goods to and from various towns and, in the case of the Hansa, enforce


membership restrictions, negotiate special tariff and export protections, and form a loose judicial system overseeing Hanseatic regulations and maritime laws.

Topic A: Political Influence and Relationship with the Holy Roman Empire

At this point in history, the organization of the league reflects its history as a trading federation and is largely unfit for any sort of sustainable political development. Although the league meets once a year and usually passes unilateral legislation regarding the economic side of league business, it is ill-equipped to change or influence any other aspect of politics required for a regional power. Each city is entirely independent with very few institutions or practices that will allow the league to respond should any outside power threaten its interests.¹⁵

In addition to structural concerns, the influence of the Holy Roman Empire limits the league’s potential to become a political power. Historically, the Holy Roman Empire has served as the political superstructure of German invaders following the fall of Rome to establish a legitimate German state in formerly Roman territories. Although several storied German kings have served to unify central Germany under the banner of the Holy Roman Empire, the empire as it currently stands is a much looser amalgamation of territories in the formerly Roman provinces of central Europe controlled by a collection of German princes nominally connected by swearing fealty to the emperor. In this sense, the Holy Roman Empire is much less an empire than a federation of states with extremely influential German princes using its imperial structure for their own benefit. These princes, who individually may have much to benefit from a more powerful Hansa, control much of the land, manpower, and wealth of central Germany and may prove helpful if the league decides to become a more established political power. Furthermore, although the name implies some tie to the Roman Catholic Church, in reality the empire is a primarily secular state. Controlled at this point by the extremely influential Habsburg family, the Holy Roman Empire is the foremost political institution in the lands of the Hansa. The way the league interacts with the empire will determine the Hansa’s success on the international political stage.¹⁶

¹⁵. Thompson, Economic and Social History, 159.

¹⁶. Nash, Hansa, 188.
As the victory in Denmark demonstrates, the ability of the league to influence the political landscape is enormous. No other body since Roman times has had the potential to be a truly international political force. Going forward, should the loose federative structure of the league be maintained if it is to become a global political player? Furthermore, despite the increasingly international nature of the Hanseatic marketplace—due to both the newly defeated Nordic regions as well as the increasingly wealthy British, Russian, and Flemish Kontore (trading posts)—membership in the Hansa is still reserved exclusively for German merchants. Merchant members are also prohibited from marrying foreigners, creating trading relationships with foreign corporations, and negotiating trade contacts with non-Hanseatic merchants. Additionally, no city may go to war without the consent of its four nearest neighbors, and the Hansa lacks the institutions, such as standing armies, collective martial traditions, and an established military command, among other things, necessary for a prolonged war. Members of the league are also subject to laws in the town in which they happen to be conducting business, which vary greatly from town to town, with Hanseatic privileges being revoked entirely if any one town’s rules are violated. These harsh laws have served the league well in the past but may need to be changed as the league continues onward. At this important crossroads in history, the way the league decides to adapt will prove to drastically alter the state of central Europe.

Questions to Consider

● Should the league even be worried about politics, or should it concern itself more with its profits?
● How should the league interact with the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church based on its goals?
● As the league expands and more foreigners become integrated into league business, should the league continue to restrict membership exclusively to German merchants?
● How should the league organize itself in response to these challenges?
Topic B: The Organization of League Operations in the Newly Acquired Nordic Countries

Following the end of the Hanseatic-Nordic conflict, the league can demand de facto monopoly trading rights in the Baltic fish markets. However, given the decentralized nature of Nordic trading structures, the legal establishment of such rights will be extremely difficult. The notion of a German monopoly unsettles many of the residents in foreign cities, who form the base from which revenue is extracted in Nordic markets, leading to a growing resentment against Hanseatic traders in these countries. Because a prolonged, overland military campaign against a hostile foreign society will be extremely costly, especially after nine years of conflict, the merchants and leaders of the league must determine how to integrate themselves into the various fabrics of the cities in which they operate. Assimilating into this new environment will require Hanseatic merchants to account for the variable cultural and social dynamics. This issue will be especially pressing in the more prosperous parts of Denmark that are left standing, given their longstanding cultural traditions related to trading that are suddenly being upended by a foreign entity.

The league needs to determine how it will begin collecting on the raw resources of the Nordic nations. In order to begin this new enterprise, the league must overcome differences with the Nordic nations, including how and when shipments are made, how contracts are drawn up, and other cultural expectations regarding trade. The league will need to focus on establishing trust around the institution of trade in order to maximize its profits in the Nordic nations. Furthermore, local tax collectors, surveyors, and established merchants more familiar with the yields and production potential of producers may be uncooperative with new German traders. Their relationship must be solid in order to maintain profitability in the newly conquered territories. Very few pro-German contacts exist after nine years of war, and local businesses and the laboring class view foreign German traders as threats to their livelihood. The league can harvest a tremendous amount of sea-based resources in the region if locals are willing to work with German merchants.

Questions to Consider

- How will the league approach a hostile population in order to maximize its profits?
- To what degree should cultural differences be accepted in new territory?
To what degree should the league alter its established practices to expand business, and to what degree should the league insist on established business practices in order to maintain consistent business standards?

**Topic C: The Maintenance of League Order**

As in any trade confederation, brigands and pirates are always a threat to league profits. As the league expands, it will be harder to secure the trade routes within the league against raiders. Within Germany, river commerce is essential to tap into the goods of the German heartland. Urban guilds of boatmen, supported by league profits, are responsible in large part for ensuring safe river navigation, with swaths of the river under the control of specific cities and specific guilds of boatmen. These collections communicated along sections of the river and were contracted out as ferry-men and mercenaries to ensure the safe passage of goods. However, as the league expands and funds for supplementing guilds become sparse, many rivers are becoming less safe. Ensuring the viability of river travel within the German heartland, even as the league becomes a more international body, will be important in ensuring the profitability of the core Hanseatic business.

Furthermore, the league’s financial and fiscal situation is becoming more of an issue. Because many German princes have the right to mint their own currency and because more international currencies are beginning to flood the Hanseatic markets, the inflationary and deflationary forces of the market are becoming a problem for the Hansa. Even though the league trades primarily in raw goods, maintaining a collectively accepted currency is becoming an increasingly pressing issue as the league expands into new markets unfamiliar with its business. The league must come to a consensus about how the integration of new states and currencies will influence the market to ensure continued efficiency.

The issue of credit is also becoming an issue. Unlike Italian traders, the Hanseatic cities have very few banks that can facilitate the movement of credit and debt, forcing many Hanseatic merchants to seek windfall from Italian banks. Although this problem is not currently an issue, the entrenchment of a decidedly non-Hanseatic business interest in Hanseatic operations may prove problematic over the long run. This is especially an issue in the East, where Italian merchants, and the credit they provide, are less established and accepted, making East-West trading interactions increasingly difficult.
Questions to Consider

- As the league transitions, how will it incorporate credit-based financing into its operations?
- How will travel and trade regulations be enacted given the wide berth of league operations?
- How will the league maintain its infrastructure as its borders continue to expand?
- How will the league regulate its fiscal and monetary situation to protect its trading standards and operations?

Delegate Positions

The Wendish bloc, many of whom have historical ties to the Holy Roman Empire and are geographically close to the seat of Habsburg power, are political conservatives who wish to see the political status quo of the Hanseatic-Imperial relationship maintained. Many of the Wendish bloc also view inter-German investment as the best area for the league to use its resources. These towns are the primary financiers of the Holy Roman Empire and many of the Hansa’s endeavors and thus view the new credit instruments of the Italians as potentially threats to their financial success.

Wolf Faerber, Ambassador from Lübeck

Ambassador Faerber, from the original Hanseatic town of Lübeck, is a statesman-businessman who wishes to see the influence of Lübeck maintained during this crossroads in Hanseatic history. Hailing from a long line of aristocrats who were present at the declaration of Lübeck’s status as a free and imperial city by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa nearly a century ago, Ambassador Faerber has strong ties to the Holy Roman emperor and he wishes to expand his several profitable deals within Germany. As a result, he wishes to see the league focus more on internal development rather than international expansion and wishes to see the league become a central fixture of the Habsburg political sphere rather than its own political entity. Having come from the town that first began standardizing Hanseatic coinage, Ambassador Faerber is well versed in the traditionalist methods of commodity-based trading and views the new financial innovations of Italian bankers as absurd. Ambassador Faerber has grown tremendously rich by shrewdly buying and selling cloth-based goods, which Lübeck specializes in, to various markets abroad with poorer craftsmanship than German weavers. Consequently, he wishes to see the expansion of the German manufacturing industry in addition to further infrastructural development.

Gerd Peters, Ambassador from Kolberg

Ambassador Peters, from the town of Kolberg, a Pomeranian town with historic ties to Polish and Germanic populations, continues to look for international
fronts to expand, particularly the foreign Kontore of London, Novgorod, and Antwerp. However, Peters is a trader in herring, cod, and salt, and views the integration of new Nordic markets as competition to his business and wishes to see the league maintain and invest in its ties to its existing international contacts rather than expand to new Nordic markets. Kolberg is also a deeply religious city, with deep ties to the Polish dioceses of the Catholic Church, and many local bishops have recently become appointed officials within the Holy Roman Empire. Ambassador Peters has deep connections with the Holy Roman emperor and does not believe a political bend is in the league’s best interests. He wishes instead to see the league invest its resources into establishing safer trade routes along the Baltic and North Sea lines and maintaining its identity as a primarily economic union.

Ambassador Kohlhase, from the town of Hamburg, serves as the primary contact in the North Sea. As such, he views the recent conquest of the Nordic countries as tremendously profitable towards his city and his own business and wishes to see the full integration of the Nordic markets into the Hanseatic network. He wishes to see the construction of more navigable alleyways near Hamburg so that goods from the Nordic markets can flow more easily into central Germany. Having come from a rich line of aristocrats who were present at the establishment of Hamburg as a free and imperial city by Frederick Barbarossa, Ambassador Kohlhase is also connected to many of the Holy Roman emperor’s various trading deals and views the maintenance of the league’s connection to the emperor as a vital part of his business. Ambassador Kohlhase has grown rich from shipping goods in and out of the North Sea through the Elbe River and is thus well versed in the financial practices of the Hansa. He sees the new investment instruments of the Italians as detrimental to his profits as a gatekeeper on the Elbe and will fight fiercely for the league to maintain its traditional financing practices.

Ambassador Hartjenstein, hailing from a city with strong ties to the Holy Roman Empire, views league attempts to become a political power as extremely dangerous and destructive to his business. Coming from a family with strong ties to many of the land contracts of the Holy Roman emperor, Ambassador Hartjenstein and his family have grown tremendously rich from the profits he has farmed from the land, and he is well versed in the establishment and organization of the feudal system. Ambassador Hartjenstein has grown rich trading hemp and rye grains that grow in and around Frankfurt. He views internal development and investment in the river network that allows for the shipment of goods throughout Germany as the best area for the league’s resources. In all cases, Ambassador Hartjenstein wishes to see the emperor respected in league proceedings.

Ambassador Merkel, who has grown rich from the salt deposits in and around Lüneburg, wishes to tap into the tremendous amount of fish offered by the new Nordic markets to complement his already booming salt trade. He wishes to expand the Nordic operations as quickly as possible, as well as invest in
connections between the North Sea and interior Germany. Ambassador Merkel also believes that the league should primarily be an economic union but wishes to see more foreign markets integrated into the Hanseatic community. Having grown up near the influence of Hamburg and the Holy Roman Empire but receiving little of the economic benefits afforded to the older and more politically established towns of Hamburg and Lübeck, Ambassador Merkel sees the opening of the Nordic markets as a potential avenue for Lüneburg to become more integrated into the Habsburg economic stage and establish itself as a regional power. However, having seen firsthand the Habsburg control in the region, Ambassador Merkel has little interest in furthering Lüneburg’s political clout and is much more focused on developing the city’s status as a trading hub.

The Saxon bloc, established and operating within the core of Germany, is composed of the humbler cities of the Hanseatic network. Many of these towns have grown rich from the natural resources of the German heartland and are not geographically connected to the new Nordic markets. Many of these towns wish to see the league expand its internal operations and invest in German industrial and agricultural development. Very few of these towns have real political ambitions and most simply wish for the league to continue flourishing as an economic union.

Ambassador Dorfmann, coming from one of the earlier Hanseatic towns, understands the league’s tremendous potential to be a political power and how Bremen in particular can serve as the political counterweight against Habsburg political control in central Europe. He wishes to see the league leverage its tremendous wealth into the purchasing of land, which will allow the league to transfer its formidable monetary control into political and military clout. Ambassador Dorfmann, in addition to being a businessman with tremendous political savvy, also controls vast amounts of land around Bremen, using it to raise large amounts of grain, especially wheat, for sale in the Hanseatic marketplace. The townships around Bremen are also extremely populous, and the city retains the right to raise royal levies, a right that would be vital to any military actions the league may wish to pursue. Ambassador Dorfmann understands the tremendous potential of the core of Germany to become an industrial and economic fixture within all Europe and hopes to be able to ally with ambassadors from other, more progressive towns to achieve his political goals.

Ambassador Kroeger, coming from another early, but less internationally connected city of the league, views the expansion of the internal body of the Hanseatic League as the most important step of the league’s future. A peasant who worked his way up from humble circumstances, Ambassador Kroeger wishes
to protect and foster a league structure that allows farmers and other common people to buy and sell their goods peacefully and safely. He thus is a strong advocate for developing the league’s infrastructure and establishing safe waterways through central Germany. Ambassador Kroeger has grown rich trading the meat and animal products from around Brunswick and was instrumental in helping feed the Hanseatic fleet during the Nordic Wars. He sees the dangers that a protracted conflict would pose to his own business ventures. Moving forward, he hopes to lead the Saxon region as a conservative counterweight against the more progressive Bremen.

Marko Mallwitz, hailing from a town that connects the many disparate parts of the Hansa, views Hanseatic political expansion as a distraction from the league’s goals as an economic union. Mallwitz’s primary experience is that of a shipbuilder and engineer and believes that the international nature of Hanseatic business will be negatively affected if it becomes a more political organization. Mallwitz runs a profitable timber and shipbuilding business in Magdeburg and was an import supplier of ships when the league raised its fleet during the recent war in Norway. Given the highly industrious shipyards of London and the Nordic countries, Ambassador Mallwitz views league expansions into international markets as detrimental to his business ventures. He wishes to instead see investment into internal infrastructure projects and the maintenance of league order.

Oscar Leistner, a former miner turned businessman who has grown rich trading the vast amounts of iron and silver ore deposited around Goslar. A believer in the importance of German purity in the Hanseatic network—given that iron deposits from London dominate the international iron trade—Ambassador Leistner also believes the league should stay a domestic economic union given his city’s distance from international market. Ambassador Leistner provides much of the iron and silver ore in the league network and has been praised by many miners in his town for protecting and ensuring the expansion of their profits. Furthermore, Goslar has been a free and imperial city for several hundred years and has enjoyed the economic benefits afforded by its connection to the Holy Roman Empire. Given these benefits, Ambassador Leistner believes heavily in the maintenance of the league’s economic identity.

Hildebrandt Desch, hailing from a town closer to the center of Germany, is a guildsman with experience in river navigation in central Germany. As such, he views the international and political expansion of the league as detrimental to his business and would rather see the league focus its resources on maintaining the navigability of its German waterways. A more expansive river network would be extremely beneficial to Ambassador Desch’s business. Ambassador Desch has grown rich off the grain crops from the hinterlands of Stade, primarily barley and rye. He is strongly against a protracted conflict, which would be detrimental to his business.
Norbert Krause, Ambassador from Berlin

Ambassador Krause, hailing from an eastern German city with ties to the North Sea and Russia, favors German international expansion into the Nordic markets. A merchant familiar with Berlin’s political scene, Krause believes the league has tremendous potential to be a unified political body that can galvanize the entire German economy. Since Berlin is between Bruges and Novgorod, Ambassador Krause has grown extremely rich managing goods traveling to and from the eastern and western parts of the league network. Seeing the ability of German statesmen to unite powerful free cities in other regions, Ambassador Krause believes that the league has the potential to truly be an international political body unseen since Roman times. In addition to his political and market expertise, Ambassador Krause has grown rich managing the production facilities in and around Berlin, trading both finished metal products and the labor of Berlin’s industrial facilities with various merchants in the Hanseatic network.

The Livonian Bloc

Comprised primarily of towns on the Baltic coast and the surrounding areas, the Livonian bloc’s merchants wish to see the expansion of the League into a more international body. Given their disconnect with the Holy Roman Empire, they welcome the idea of a league structure that commits more resources out of the German heartland and into the margins of the Hanseatic network.

Ernst Liljestrom, Ambassador from Visby

Ambassador Liljestrom, representing the city most connected to North Sea trade, wishes to see international expansion become the league’s foremost focus. During the Nordic War, many of the profitable ports in Visby were destroyed. Following the recent victory of the league over Norway, Visby was returned to Denmark and its ports were reopened, with many of the damaged but still functional harbors providing a node for travel between northern Germanic ports and the Baltic and Novgorodian markets. The city of Visby is still reeling from the devastation of the Nordic conquest, and Liljestrom wishes to see league resources flow north to help rebuild his city. Any investment in international markets will help Visby rebuild, but investment in the new Nordic markets would grant new strategic significance to the island. Ambassador Liljestrom is also a proponent of the new Italian credit instruments, as they constitute another source of funding to help his city rebuild.

Johannes Lundell, Ambassador from Danzig (Gdańsk)

Ambassador Lundell, hailing from Danzig, views international expansion as the league’s most important goal moving forward. The city has had a history of turmoil between its native Polish population and the German Teutonic Knights that have encouraged greater German cultural influence in the region, and therefore it relies on the league to help maintain stability in its waterways to the Baltic Sea. Given its distance from the German core, the city of Danzig would profit greatly from league efforts to expand to its eastern sections, particularly given Danzig’s proximity to Novgorod. The city is the Baltic center for forestry products but faces competition from other cities within the German core for
timber exports and therefore favors the expansion of the league’s international presence so that the city may better leverage its timber resources. Ambassador Lundell views the Nordic markets as an important new place for him to grow his sizable shipbuilding business as well as a potential new market for him to market the rare amber that is harvested from trees on the Baltic coast.

Ambassador Torvalds, hailing from Stockholm, views the Livonian region as the best frontier for the league’s expansion and wishes to see more German resources poured into the Baltic region given the abundance of forestry products that can be used to build ships. Torvalds wishes to see the league become a political power and believes the establishment of a superior naval force to be key to this endeavor. Torvalds views expansion into the Nordic countries as beneficial as it will open new markets from which the league may draw profits. Torvalds has grown rich from an especially high-quality tar that is available in great quantities around Stockholm and is demanded by shipbuilders within the Hanseatic network.

Ambassador Hilprand, hailing from Kraków, is an educated merchant who deals not in physical resources but in the contracting of art and luxury goods for which Kraków is known. Ambassador Hilprand views the less developed Nordic countries as a relatively unimportant market for his business and cares more about courting the noblemen of central Europe. Ambassador Hilprand also wishes to see the league become a patron of culture between Polish and Germanic cities, bringing in influences from foreign Kontore as well. Connected heavily with both the Polish crown and the Holy Roman emperor, Ambassador Hilprand views political ambitions as detrimental to his business and wishes to see the league focus on infrastructure and the maintenance of stability. He wishes to see greater expansion of trade between Germany and the Baltic states, and perhaps even the London and Bruges Kontore.

Ambassador Tann, a new merchant to the league, views league international expansion as extremely important, believing the establishment of a standing league navy as the foremost avenue to such a goal. A city with cultural differences between Polish and Germanic inhabitants, Breslau would benefit tremendously from league investment. The town has close ties to the Kingdom of Bohemia, incorporated recently into the Holy Roman Empire. Ambassador Tann does not wish to anger the Polish inhabitants near Breslau with any political ambitions, preferring instead to see the league grow economically. The ambassador has grown rich on the trading of wax, given Breslau’s high concentration of bees. Tann views expansion into Nordic markets as good for his business because wax is used heavily in shipbuilding.

Consisting of townships with the most to gain from league political expansion, the Westphalian bloc is the collection of cities that wish to see the league develop...
foremost into a political organization. Much of this political expansion will require the ability to raise troops, however, and thus will require the league to commit resources to pay for and support a standing army.

Ambassador Baue favors the creation of a Hanseatic political state. Coming from an earlier Hanseatic city with a rich history of political struggle and subsequent independence, Ambassador Baue was schooled since a young age with Colognian and German pride. Because Cologne is a center for many disparate parts of the economic network of the Hansa, Ambassador Baue believes the Hansa can truly unite the economic powers of Germany to become a European powerhouse. Cologne has imperial permission to raise and maintain a standing army, and Ambassador Baue personally bankrolls many of the city’s martial units. Ambassador Baue is a shrewd businessman who has leveraged Cologne’s unique geographic location to gain considerable profits facilitating trade between all four corners of the Hanseatic network. Ambassador Baue has also grown rich from the trading of timber goods in and around Cologne.

Ambassador Heim views international expansion as the league’s foremost goal. He has grown rich buying and selling Rhenish wines to and from various sections of the Hanseatic network and believes international expansion will help his business develop. Deventer is also the central location for Hanseatic coinage, and therefore Ambassador Heim strongly opposes Italian credit instruments that act against his city’s interests. Deventer’s location makes it the prime place to buy and sell the new Norwegian fish that is expected to flow in through the Baltic Sea. As a result, Ambassador Heim views Norwegian integration into the league as extremely profitable for his business.

Ambassador Klepping, hailing from Dortmund, is from a long line of aristocratic businessmen that have ties to the English crown, funding royal ventures as recently as this past decade. Dortmund is a major source of coal and iron ore in western Germany, and Ambassador Klepping possesses particularly profitable iron contracts with London and Westphalia. Ambassador Klepping also oversees the influx of English manufactured products into the German heartland. Given Dortmund’s geographic centrality in Westphalia, Klepping views it as the prime city to lead the region to economic prominence, but he does not see a framework for the league to incorporate the English crown into a political union. Klepping believes league resources are best suited to flow westward into England but believes the league should distance itself from political ambitions that would distract from its economic prominence.

Ambassador Peterson, hailing from Groningen, views international expansion as the league’s most important goal. Given Groningen’s geographic proximity to England, Ambassador Peterson wishes to see the league invest in more avenues westward to England. Ambassador Peterson trades primarily in sugar, which can be created from sugar beets found in Groningen. Given sugar is primarily a
luxury resource, Ambassador Peterson is primarily concerned with the maintenance of league stability and the continuation of the Hanseatic economic identity. Ambassador Peterson also favors the adoption of new trade instruments from the Italians.

Ambassador von Liden, hailing from central Germany, views the protection of the league’s German identity as extremely important. Deeply loyal to the Holy Roman emperor, Ambassador von Liden believes that the league should work towards becoming more integrated with the emperor's political wishes and push for the investment of inter-German infrastructure. Ambassador von Liden is also a deeply religious man and believes deeply in the conviction that the Church should be integrated more into the league’s network. The ambassador trades primarily in furs from the surrounding forests of Münster.

Composed of ambassadors plying their trade from foreign cities, the Kontore are united by their status as collections of German merchants operating outside Germany and thus share an international perspective on how the league should move forward. Given their distinct geographies and interaction with foreign markets, the foreign Kontore view league international expansion as the best course of action. As merchants with international scope, they are particularly progressive in financial developments and political thought, though in a manner that emphasizes the league’s international presence rather than the development of an alternative to the Holy Roman emperor’s hold on central Germany.

Ambassador Riblins favors Nordic expansion as another opportunity for Russian trade and believes the expansion of the league’s international presence is essential for its long-term health. The Riblins family has been established within Novgorod’s guild system for centuries, and Ambassador Riblins himself has a deep understanding of the Russian economic and political system, believing such a federative model may be something the league can adopt as a political framework. Ambassador Riblins trades primarily in grain, especially wheat, from the hinterlands of Russia, as well as luxury furs and honey, both valuable resources desired by European aristocrats. Being geographically removed from the western parts of the empire, Ambassador Riblins is deeply wary of the new Italian credit instruments that promise increased trade efficiency within the network.

Ambassador Piers favors Nordic expansion, as he hails from a crossroads city, and views the political aims of some in the league as a distraction. Given Bruges’s cultural diversity and difficulty maintaining a unified government, Ambassador Piers is doubtful an international Hanseatic state is fully practical. Ambassador Piers welcomes league expansion west to Portugal and Spain, as well as south to Italy. Ambassador Piers trades primarily in cloth, silk tapestries, and other cotton
stuffs, and is interested in the Italian credit instruments’ promise to boost his ventures.

Ambassador Rosenveld favors expansion internationally but does not wish to see the league develop politically. Given the hold the English crown has over his profits, Ambassador Rosenveld views political ambitions as simultaneously impractical and difficult to enforce. Ambassador Rosenveld has ties to the interior parts of England and believes further expansion into Scotland and Wales should be the focus of the league’s long-term ambitions. Ambassador Rosenveld trades primarily in finished cloth products, wool, and craft metal products from London’s industrial district.

Ambassador Dewaele, hailing from Antwerp, believes international expansion to be the most important goal for the league. Seeing the enormous potential the new Italian credit instruments have to expand his profits, Ambassador Dewaele wishes to see them adopted throughout the league in order to expand the profitability of the network. Believing also in the tolerance of foreigners, Ambassador Dewaele wishes to see more foreign cities in the southern and western portions of the league network be integrated into the league. Ambassador Dewaele trades in some foreign goods, such as spices, and is a proponent of credit and international banking practices.
Bibliography


