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Isabelle Richefort and Burghart Schmidt, eds., *Les Relations entre la France et les villes hanséatiques de Hambourg, Brême et Lübeck: Moyen Âge - XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle – Die Beziehungen zwischen Frankreich und den Hansestädten Hamburg, Bremen und Lübeck: Mittelalter – 19. Jahrhundert*. Peter Lang: Brussels, 2006. 536 pp. \$44 (pb). ISBN 90-5201-286-5.

Review by Peter G. Wallace, Hartwick College.

This collection contains twenty-three essays drawn from a colloquium held in Paris in 2002 under the sponsorship of the Archives du ministère des Affaires étrangères and the German Historical Institute in Paris. Nine essays are in German, the remainder in French, and each comes with a comparable summary in the other language, except for Burghart Schmidt's German introduction, which discusses the background for the colloquium and the thrust of the individual papers, and the concluding comments of Jean-Pierre Poussou. Commercial contact between the three Imperial cities and French merchants began as early as the thirteenth century and continued through the revolutionary era with a final trade treaty signed in 1865, but only Richefort and Burghart Schmidt's concluding essays address the Revolutionary era and nineteenth-century. The Swiss scholar, Guy Marchal, writes on the transformation of diplomatic rituals and protocols for agents of the Swiss Confederation in Paris. It provides a comparative framework but seems out of place in the collection. The remaining essays cover the late medieval and early modern eras; and though other regions form part of the context, the contributions all focus on French-Hanseatic relations. To approach these relations, the authors address four themes: 1) the diverse and changing political and economic relations between France and the three cities; 2) the economic infrastructure within the trading system; 3) the diplomatic protocols of trade relations; and 4) interpersonal and intercultural exchanges.

Simonne Abraham-Thisse, Thomas Hill, and Peter Stabel's opening essays explore late medieval trade relations between the three cities and France. Hanseatic merchants encountered French traders at the fairs of Champagne, and some Germans visited Parisian markets. However, the bulk of the trading activity between the Hanse and French ports occurred along the French Atlantic coastline, which initially attracted fleets of Hanseatic ships in search of salt in the Bourgneuf Bay. The salt trade had its risks for the Germans, and in 1440 Basque pirates captured a fleet of forty Hanseatic ships. In response Hanseatic merchants threatened retaliation against Spanish merchants at the Flemish entrepôt at Bruges, which served into the sixteenth century as the central clearinghouse for Hanseatic trade with western European states including France. Merchants from Lübeck and Hamburg (Hill shows that Bremen was not active in this trade) brought furs, amber, lumber, and mineral products to Bruges and returned to the Baltic Basin with fine cloth and other luxury items from France and elsewhere. Bremen, located upstream on the Weser River, was initially less active in the east-west trading network, but rather profited by connecting its hinterlands in Westphalia and Lower Saxony to products in the North and Baltic Sea basins. Nevertheless, French officials became aware of Bremen when one of its privateers captured a ship belonging to the French queen, Marie of Anjou, in 1446, triggering fifteen years of negotiations over damages and interest that eventually involved all the members of the Hanseatic League.

The next four authors explore the Hanseatic League's late medieval diplomatic exchanges with France in the context of the League's broader political and commercial interests in Northern Europe. Each author takes a different perspective, and together they create a composite multi-dimensional image of the complexities in the region. From the perspective of the French court, Jürgen Sarnowsky shows its drive toward the gradual extension and thickening of diplomatic ties with the Hanseatic towns to the point of full treaties by the end of the fifteenth century that secured the French presence in the northern trading network. Petra Ehm-Schnocks examines the network as seen by Charles the Bold's Burgundian officials who did not view the Hanseatic towns as equal partners in negotiations and at times were confused about whether to treat the cities individually or collectively. Using Hanseatic sources, Thomas Behrman argues that diplomatic relations with the French were only one side of a multifaceted complex of negotiations with European powers from Russia to England. He concludes that there was never a fully articulated "Hanseatic" foreign policy in the fifteenth century; rather each town clung to its own traditional policies that had preceded the League and were slow to change direction or move in concert. Nevertheless, by the end of the fifteenth century, Lübeck had emerged as the dominant player in the League's relations with their neighbors, and no embassy was dispatched without Lübeck's involvement. Finally, Klaus Krüger's fascinating essay uses civic chronicles to explore how various towns described political events in foreign lands, and he argues that defining what foreign news was important, such as the Hussite rebellion and its effects on the neighboring House of Luxemburg, and what news represented potential threats to civic order helped generate a strong sense of solidarity within the communities as well as the recognition of a shared political fate and among the three cities.

Although Bremen, Hamburg and Lübeck remained as League members until the 1860s, the Hanseatic League ceased to be a critical Northern European political player in the course of the sixteenth century. Georg Schmidt's essay lays out the political framework for the next set of contributions. He plots the absorption of many of the smaller league members into the emerging territorial principalities in sixteenth-century Northern Germany. By the late sixteenth century, Swedish and Danish fleets would overshadow the Hanseatic navy in the Baltic Basin. In short, even collectively the Hanseatic Imperial cities could not match the military force of the emerging dynastic states. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Prussia and Russia would become the new power brokers in the Northern seas. Dieter Heckmann's contribution examines the first, unsuccessful efforts of Duke Albert of Prussia (1499-1545) to export charcoal to France; later efforts would prove more fruitful. Moreover, according to Jacques Bottin, the sixteenth-century Hanseatic towns also found themselves constrained commercially as their trade was filtered through Antwerp, which had replaced Bruges as the key emporium, while later in the seventeenth century Amsterdam would succeed to Antwerp's position. These shifts were tied to the changing fortunes of religious war and the struggles between France and the Habsburgs. In the later seventeenth century Georg Schmidt notes that due to fortunes of war Louis XIV would aggressively pursue trade relations favorable to the three cities as a counterweight to Dutch influence in the North and Baltic Seas, which finally established profitable direct commercial ties. Finally, Klaus Malettke shows that the seventeenth-century French geographers retained a detailed sense of the political culture of the Hanseatic cities based on his reading of *La Description d'Allemagne* of Théodore Godefroy. In this text, knowledge of Hamburg, Lübeck, and Bremen mattered. In the following century, the *Encyclopédie* offered vague and generalized descriptions of what had become less significant foreign ports, perceived as cultural backwaters.

Though the Hanseatic League's political might had waned, the early modern cities were still self-governing, and profits from lucrative trade were possible. Commerce between French ports and the German cities remained concentrated along the western coast of France with salt as always a critical commodity. Bordeaux and La Rochelle were the harbors that now drew the German ships. As those Atlantic ports became engaged in the export of wine and the import of colonial supplies, merchants from Lübeck, Hamburg, and Bremen pursued profit there. Anne-Marie Cocula traces the beginning of the Bordeaux wine trade with the Hanseatic towns back to the end of the Hundred Years War. Though

sixteenth-century trade was irregular, with the Wars of Religion having a dampening effect, by the seventeenth century ties between Bordeaux and the Hanseatic towns had stabilized. Peter Voss traces the career of the “ehrsame Herr Johannes Baumgärten in Bordeaux” (1632-1702), a Prussian merchant born in Thoru (Torun), who was a leader in a colony of German merchants residing in Bordeaux. He imported naval munitions, lumber and copper from the Baltic Basin to Bordeaux and sent back fine wines. His trade contacts extended from London to Riga, but much of this traffic was funneled through Hamburg. Baumgärten served as a Protestant church elder in Bordeaux, but he accepted Catholicism with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, though several of his sons refused and emigrated to Hamburg and other northern ports. In the capitation roll of 1695, Baumgärten was one of the richest citizens of Bordeaux. Michel Espagne, on the other hand, sees the late-seventeenth-century German merchant community in Bordeaux politically and economically integrated but culturally distinct. He bases his assessment on what is perhaps a too facile argument built on how documents have been classified archivally – drawing national distinctions – and the fact that the expatriate German merchants still wrote in German or Dutch to their colleagues and family members in the northern ports. Filled with ruminations on memory, identity, and collective memory, this is one of the weaker pieces in the collection.

The presence of Hanseatic merchants in the French Atlantic ports was in part due to a treaty negotiated in 1655, which had taken a long time to be realized. Rainer Postal follows the unresolved negotiations between French officials and the three Hanseatic cities in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Throughout the French agents took the initiative. From the French perspective closer ties to Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck would insert French influence in the Baltic Basin and Northern Germany at the expense of their Habsburg rivals. Down to 1648, however, the three cities wisely sought to stay out of the great power struggle. After the Peace of Westphalia, the Hanse towns reconsidered the opportunities for trade and political advantages that a treaty with Louis XIV would offer. Antjekathrin Grassman demonstrates from the perspective of Lübeck how the treaty of 1655 opened up the possibility of being a “player” in the major peace treaties of Louis XIV’s reign, especially Nijmegen and Ryswick, where the city had its trading rights recognized by all parties. For Pascal Even, the treaty of 1655 initiated an extended period of trade for Hanseatic merchants in La Rochelle. Colbert supported and encouraged these ties in the decades after the signing of the treaty. German ships left La Rochelle filled with salt, wine, alcohol, soap, dried fruits, paper, and exotic colonial products of all sorts. They returned to La Rochelle carrying lead, copper, and ship building supplies. By the eve of the French Revolution, one in three foreign ships in La Rochelle’s harbor had originated in Hamburg, Lübeck, or Bremen.

Diplomatic relations remained critical for sustaining trade throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Marie-Louis Pelus-Kaplan follows the career Christophe Brosseau, who represented Hanseatic interests at Paris from 1698 to 1717, while Lucien Bély details the mission of the French diplomat Jean-Baptiste Poussin at Hamburg in 1714. Both agents served as a source for vital information for their superiors. Poussin’s reports describe Hamburg as a diplomatic nerve center for news and gossip with agents from all of the major Northern powers maintaining residences in the city. Brosseau’s correspondence with Daniel Müller, a friend and official in Lübeck, is also full of information about politics at Versailles, where he developed close ties with Philippe d’Orléans, and the status of negotiations for the major peace treaties of Ryswick and later Utrecht and Rastatt. With the death of Louis XIV, Brosseau successfully negotiated a renewal of the trade treaty of 1655 with the young king and his regent Philippe d’Orléans.

Finally war and peace form the backdrop for Burghart Schmidt’s essay, which carries us into the nineteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, Hamburg had emerged as the principal city of the Hanseatic triad. It sheltered a stock exchange and was a crucial center for finance and shipping insurance. It had become the major northern transfer port for French colonial products in the decades prior to the Revolution with nearly 40 percent of all French colonial goods transferred from there to

markets in Central and Eastern Europe, but the commercial warfare between England and France that began in the 1790s and continued through Napoleon's reign resulted in a shift at Hamburg and Bremen to England as the principal trading partner in the early nineteenth century. It would be a permanent shift. Isabelle Richefort's essay covers the nineteenth century. She argues that economic liberalism replaced commercial warfare. This was embodied in the commercial treaty of 1865, the final act of six centuries of economic and political relations between France and the Hanseatic League.

The original colloquium sought to bring together European scholars from many lands to explore the history of commercial, political, diplomatic, and interpersonal relations between these three North German ports and France. The organizers have succeeded. Employing new archival sources, the participants exposed new historical insights from distinct and insightful perspectives. It is clear the commercial dynamics that have helped bring about the European Union were at play in late medieval and early modern Europe. The essays recount commercial and diplomatic agents operating cross-culturally but not in the framework of national histories. Even "France" in these essays is normally embodied as particular French towns with particular commercial interests. French kings became engaged when dynastic interests were at stake. It was only with the French Revolution that competition for access to the markets at Hamburg, Lübeck, and Bremen become national concerns between France and England. The story ends with the emergence of the German nation state under Bismarck. This collection has much to offer for economic historians but also more broadly for late medievalists and early modernists in general.

Burghart Schmidt, "Die Beziehungen zwischen Frankreich und den drei Hansestädten Hamburg, Bremen und Lübeck in Zeichen von Politik, Wirtschaft, und Kultur (13.-19. Jahrhundert)"

Simonne Abraham-Thisse, "Les relations commerciales entre la France et les villes hanséatiques de Hambourg, Lübeck et Brême au moyen âge"

Thomas Hill, "Bremen, die Hanse und Frankreich im Mittelalter;" Peter Stabel, "Bruges, plaque tournante du commerce hanséatique avec la France (XIV<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)"

Jürgen Sarnowsky, "Die politische Beziehungen der Hansestädte zu Frankreich im späteren Mittelalter"

Thomas Behrmann, "Y avait-il un diplomatie hanséate au moyen âge"

Petra Ehm-Schnocks, "Handelspartner, Reichsfeind, Städtefeind: Karl der Kühne und die Hanse 1465-1477"

Klaus Krüger, "'Böhmen und andere Fürsten': aussenpolitische Konstellationen in der Sicht hansischer Städte des späten Mittelalters"

Guy P. Marchel, "Le rôle de la représentation symbolique dans les relations diplomatiques: les envoyés de la Confédération Helvétique à Paris"

Georg Schmidt, "Hanse, Hanseaten und Reich in der frühen Neuzeit;" Klaus Malettke, "Les villes hanséatiques, le Saint-Empire et la France aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles"

Dieter Heckmann, "Die Wirtschaftsbeziehungen zwischen der Herzögen in Preussen und Frankreich im 16. Jahrhundert"

Anne-Marie Cocula, "Les réponses du marché aquitain à l'approvisionnement des pays du nord à la fin du XV<sup>e</sup> et au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles"

Jaques Bottin, “Les relations entre Rouen, Hambourg et Anvers vers 1600: système commercial et complémentarité de fonctions”

Peter Voss, “Der ‘ehrsame Herr Johannes Baumgaerten in Bordeaux’ (1632-1702). Ein preussischer Kaufmann im Frankreichhandel der frühen Neuzeit”

Michel Espagne, “Papiers allemands, papiers français: l’existence d’une mémoire interculturelle et ses usages historiographiques”

Rainer Postel, “‘Ein Cunthor in Frankreich?’ – diplomatische und wirtschaftliche Beziehungen zwischen der späten Hanse und Frankreich;” Antjekathrin Grassmann, “Friedensverhandlungen und wirtschaftliche Interessen. Lübeck und Frankreich in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts ”

Marie-Louise Pelus-Kaplan, “Christophe Brosseau, résident hanséatique à Paris, et son action de 1698 à 1717”

Lucien Bély, “Jean Baptiste Poussin, envoyé de France à Hambourg: négociateur subalterne et informateur de premier plan”

Pascal Even, “La Rochelle et le commerce du nord au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle”

Burghart Schmidt, “Le commerce extérieur des villes hanséatiques au temps des guerres de la Révolution”

Isabelle Richefort, “Le traité de commerce et de navigation entre la France et les villes de Brême, Hambourg et Lübeck;” Jean-Pierre Poussou, “Conclusions.”

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