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THE HANSA TOWNS AND SCANDINAVIA ON THE EVE OF SWEDISH INDEPENDENCE¹

WHEN Gustav Eriksson was elected king of Sweden in 1523, only two accredited foreign envoys were present. They represented the Hansa town of Lübeck, which, with Danzig, was Sweden's solitary ally in its desperate fight for independence. The presence of these envoys—Bernt Bomhouwer and Simon Plonnies—was not a mere accident. During Sweden's long struggle against the Danish King John (Hans) and his son and successor Christian II, Lübeck, as the chief of the so-called "Wendic" towns, had found herself almost constantly in negotiation, and occasionally at war, with the Danish state. Danzig, in its more remote position on the southeastern Baltic littoral, owed allegiance to the Polish crown; but its trade with western Europe, like that of the Wendic towns, had to pass through the Sound, where the officers of the Danish king collected toll dues on all cargoes entering or leaving the Baltic Sea. The ancient brass cannon that rest peacefully on the battlements of Cronborg castle at Elsinore—now mere museum specimens—bear mute testimony to the power long wielded by Denmark at that strategic point.

¹ Paper read at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association held in Minneapolis, December 28, 1931. The manuscript materials used in this paper were secured through a grant-in-aid made by the Social Science Research Council in 1930.

The Hansa towns had long been a factor to be reckoned with. They had administered a severe defeat to King Waldemar at the Peace of Stralsund in 1370; they had organized a league of towns and developed a diplomatic technique that answered adequately to their expanding economic needs. Often represented on the *Hansetage* were the Livonian towns of Riga, Dorpat, and Reval, which, like the Swedish frontier post at Wiborg, faced Novgorod and Muscovy. The way to Russia was carefully guarded by the German Baltic towns; and, economically as well as politically, Denmark at the opening of the sixteenth century made a series of efforts to break this Hanseatic cordon.

For the purposes of the present account, the agreement of Segeberg (1506)² may be taken as the beginning of a series of Hanseatic-Scandinavian complications that reached their climax when Gustavus Vasa became the first king of modern Sweden in 1523. At Segeberg, King John forced an agreement from Lübeck and the Wendic towns to refrain from trade with the rebellious Swedes. John's nephew, James IV of Scotland,³ was prevailed upon to take a hand in cowing the German towns; and Louis XII of France sent his herald to work for peace in the king's interest. A third king, Henry VII of England, only expressed a mild interest in King John's Hanseatic diplomacy. The Hansa factory in London had been brought well under control, and that was enough for the present. A fourth ruler whose interest John enlisted was the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian, to whom the king made a successful appeal for help. The Emperor, at King John's instance, published a ban against the Swedes, which forbade all trade with them. Intended for the imperial German towns, it afforded a precedent

² *Hanserecesse, 1473-1530* (24 vols.; Leipzig, 1870-1913), ser. 3, V, 246-48. Cited hereafter as *H.R.*

³ James IV to John of Denmark, between Oct., 1506, and Jan., 1507, *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 289-90. See also *ibid.*, p. 290 (Nos. 216, 217). Louis XII to Lübeck, Mar. 3, 1507; *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 292. Henry VII to Lübeck, Jan. 28, 1507; *ibid.*, p. 290. Lübeck's reply, early April, 1507; *ibid.*, p. 295. Notarial instrument, May 6, 1507; *ibid.*, p. 297. Danzig's instructions to envoys, prior to May 9, 1507; *ibid.*, pp. 335-39. Danzig account of Hansa diet at Lübeck, May 21, etc., 1507; *ibid.*, pp. 345-68. Recess zu Lübeck, May 16-June 6, 1507; *ibid.*, pp. 303-32; cf. pp. 299-300 (Nos. 232, 233).

for imperial intervention in Scandinavian affairs that was not without danger.

King John was fighting to maintain the Scandinavian union. He disregarded theoretical considerations and proceeded to put pressure on Lübeck, Danzig, and the north German towns to effect their assent to the imperial ban. At the diet of the Hansa towns held in May and early June, 1507, twenty-six towns sent envoys. Others explained their absence in letters. Lübeck's insistence on action regarding Denmark's breach of privileges at the expense of Hanseatic merchants whose activities would be hemmed by the imperial Act, was met by Cologne's reply that the towns had other and more serious breaches to think about—as in London and Flanders. Danzig's burgomaster was in attendance at the *Hansetag*, and he proceeded to minimize the edict. It applied to individual towns and was not all-inclusive, he said. Danzig had received no help from the Hansa towns in its last year's difficulties with Denmark; and now that Denmark and Danzig were at peace, he felt that conciliation was in order. To Lübeck's request for support against the Danish king at the meeting soon to be held in Nyköbing, Danzig answered significantly that the town council and burghers would have to be consulted.

The reason for Danzig's attitude is not far to seek. The her-ring fisheries at Falsterbo and Skanör had long been in the hands of the north German towns. The extent of the fishing activities of the towns has been exaggerated by travelers, whose accounts of what they thought they saw have been accepted by a number of well-known modern writers on Hanseatic history. Official estimates show an activity sufficiently great to require no embellishment. In 1523, at the close of the period under discussion, 7,515 boats, manned by an average of five persons per boat, were reported by the Lübeck official (*Vogt*) as fishing off Falsterbo alone, during the preceding season. The catch was estimated at 7,703 kegs. The calculated revenue for the Danish crown from the Skåne fisheries tolls in 1523 was 2,500–3,000

marks, a considerable sum for that time.⁴ In the closing decade of the fifteenth century, one authority estimates a total catch of some 50,000 kegs on which tolls were paid by the Hansa *Vögte* in Skåne in a single year.⁵ Salt fish or herring were an essential part of every allotment of rations. With the kegs weighing upward of sixteen pounds each, here was enough to supply a large army with a year's ration of fish.

The plots of ground, or *Fitten*, where the herring were cleaned, salted, and packed in barrels were assigned to the different German towns. During the early autumn, especially from August to October, the little peninsula extending south from Skåne was humming with the voices of fishwives, the hammering of the coopers, the activities of the packers. Danzig's plot at Falsterbo was well located by the shore, while Lübeck's *Fitte* lay in a somewhat less favorable place, just back of Danzig's and west of the town.⁶ Occasionally during the idle months when the herring fleets were in their home ports, the sea encroached on the *Fitten* territory, the boundary stakes had a way of disappearing, and claims and counter-claims among the German towns were the result. Meantime, the Lübeckers became more insistent on presenting a united front to King John, who was making desperate efforts to put through his plan for the economic isolation of Sweden. Danzig was not prepared to join the Wendic towns in this effort, except as it would help the town secure more favorable terms for the Skåne fishing rights.

King John had here an excellent opportunity to split the ranks of the German towns. At the meeting of Nyköping on the Danish island of Falster, in June–July, 1507, the Wendic towns and Danzig met the Danish king and his advisers.⁷ That Lübeck's game was up was clear from the start, for Danzig as-

⁴ "Cantsler Claus Giordsens Optegnelser," in [*Nye*] *Dansk Magazin*, ser. 2, VI (1836), 313.

⁵ Wehrmann, in *Zeitschrift für lübeckische Geschichte*, II, 130, cited in D. Schäfer, *Das Buch des lübeckischen Vogts auf Schonen* (2d ed.; Lübeck, 1929), p. xliii.

⁶ Schäfer, *op. cit.*, pp. civ–cxvi and Karte II.

⁷ Account of Danzig's envoys, June 21–July 8, 1507; *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 404–20. Cf. "Recess zu Nykjöbing," *ibid.*, No. 261. For a general account, see *Danmarks Riges Historie* (6 vols.; Copenhagen, 1896–1907), IIIa, 109–12.

sumed the rôle of mediator, accepted the imperial ban against Sweden, and preferred to take its chances on a separate agreement with the Danish authorities in the Skåne fisheries matter. Back of the scenes at the Nyköping meeting were the envoys of Scotland and France, both active in the king's cause.⁸ The Swedes, whose leader in the struggle with Denmark was now Svante Sture, had been anxiously awaiting news from Nyköping; but all they got was an offer of peaceful mediation. Svante Sture rightly suspected that, though the voice offering mediation might be Lübeck's, the controlling hand was not.⁹

The agreement of Nyköping, when given sober second thought, did not answer the expectations of the Danzigers. Doubts had already been expressed to King John in May, 1507, when Danzig indicated that King Sigismund and the (west) Prussian estates had not asked to have the Act carried out.¹⁰ Polish suzerainty provided Danzig a convenient shelter from diplomatic gusts that was at times highly useful. Nor did other German towns pay more than passing attention to Maximilian's Act, as King John was soon to learn. To Lübeck was delegated the unwelcome mission of getting the approval of various towns to the Nyköping resolutions. King John's own secretary accompanied the envoys to check up on the job, but the king found presently that the German towns in the Baltic were trading with Sweden as before. Again an appeal was sent to the Scottish king. This time James was asked for two armed ships and was requested to send a warning letter to the towns.¹¹ The failure that King John noted was soon to be explained. Before James IV could reply to King John's letter, Lübeck had drafted a treaty that contemplated open war between the Wendic cities

⁸ King John to James IV, July 20, 1507; *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 422-23.

⁹ Svante Nilsson Sture's observations on the coming Stockholm *riksdag* (Oct. 25, 1507), *Handlingar rör. Skandinaviens historia* (Stockholm, 1835), XX, 205-8. Cf. *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 427-29; *Handlingar*, XX, 219-24; and Hans Brask to Svante Sture, Nov. 5, 1507, in C. G. Styffe, *Bidrag till Skandinaviens historia* (5 vols.; Stockholm, 1859-84), V, 224.

¹⁰ Notarial instrument, May 23, 1507; *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 299-300. Danzig to John, May 25, 1507; *ibid.*, p. 300.

¹¹ John to James IV, Jan. 10, 1508; *ibid.*, 452-53.

and Denmark, and that included plans for getting Danzig and the Livonian towns into the alliance.¹² The princes who built up the "New Monarchies" of the early sixteenth century were fighting on a wide front. Their conflict with the burghers was an important phase of this struggle. A solidarity of feeling was developing among the rulers, and that boded no good to the Hansa towns.¹³ Had the Emperor Maximilian seen his way to stand by his guns and make common cause with the rulers, the final victory of the princes might have been hastened. But at this point Lübeck managed to give the Danish king a dose of his own medicine. On the plea that the Nyköbing Treaty was really calculated to separate Lübeck from the Empire, Maximilian raised the ban that prevented Lübeck and the Hansa towns from trading with Sweden.¹⁴ It was now Lübeck's turn to seek the shelter of imperial suzerainty. Danzig, though not yet in the mood for war against Denmark, and still anxious to arrive at a solution of the Skåne fisheries tangle, began to see other dangers to the towns. The Danish king was planning to make Copenhagen a staple town and to establish another staple port at "New Narva"—apparently Iwangorod, opposite the old Narva; the German princes and secular lords were forming new combinations against the towns; the Danish king was reported to be negotiating with the Livonian master, Walther von Plettenberg, for Harrien and Wirland, the former Danish colony on the Finland Gulf that the Livonians had acquired in the fourteenth century; King John, who had sent his envoy, the "herald," David Cochrane (or Kock), on numerous missions to Muscovy, was reported to have come to a new understanding with the Muscovite grand duke.¹⁵

In the summer of 1509, the relations between the Wendic towns and Denmark were finally to reach the breaking-point. The emperor was throwing his influence on the side of Lübeck. He warned, not only the other Hansa towns against aiding the

¹² Lübeck's draft of treaty, toward end of Jan., 1508; *ibid.*, pp. 453-55.

¹³ Cf. James IV to Lübeck, toward end of Jan., 1508; *ibid.*, p. 290.

¹⁴ Maximilian to all imperial subjects, Feb. 13, 1508; *ibid.*, p. 458, and pp. 458-59 (Nos. 345-47).

¹⁵ Danzig's reply to Lübeck, Mar. 10, 1508; *ibid.*, pp. 461-66.

Danish king, but also Danzig, Prussia, Livonia, and the Margrave of Brandenburg.¹⁶ While the storm clouds were gathering, King Sigismund of Poland sent an envoy to Copenhagen to sniff the breeze on Danzig's behalf, clearly with a view to a *modus vivendi* that would enable Danzig to keep the peace.¹⁷ On the night of July 10–11, 1509, the burghers of Lübeck heard shots off Travemünde.¹⁸ Denmark and the Wendic towns were at grips, and formal war might be on at any time.

King John's accusation that Danzig was carrying water on both shoulders was not without foundation.¹⁹ When the choice was between Skåne herring and the common interests of the towns, the herring came first. Moreover, many Danzig ships were still in Netherland and English ports; so it was felt that serious talk about alliance with the Wendic towns might be more safely taken up when Baltic navigation was closed for the winter.²⁰ But what of Sweden? There the peace party, led by Jacob Ulfsson, the Archbishop of Upsala, was in control. A commercial treaty with Lübeck was drawn up on October 14, 1509, by the Swedish state council (*riksråd*), just as the six Wendic towns were renewing their alliance for a fifteen-year period; but the powerful archbishop threw his influence in the scales for peace and for the maintenance of the union with Denmark and Norway.²¹ The Roman Curia had long worked to the same end through its legate, Cardinal Raimund, who was in Lübeck in May, 1508. Even open war between Denmark and the Wendic towns could not draw the cautious regent, Svante Sture, and the *riksråd* into the conflict. On August 19, 1509, King John exacted from the Swedish envoys whom he met in Copenhagen a written promise that, in case of actual war between Denmark and Lübeck, the Swedes would sequester in the king's interest any Lübeck merchants, ships, and goods that

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 505–6, 531 (summaries).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 538–39.

¹⁸ Lübeck to Hamburg, July 11, 1509; *ibid.*, p. 541.

¹⁹ Jürgen Zimmermann's report to Danzig, July 9–Aug. 10, 1509; *ibid.*, p. 546.

²⁰ Danzig to Lübeck and other Wendic towns; *ibid.*, p. 576.

²¹ Styffe, *op. cit.*, V, 375–76; *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 594; cf. *ibid.*, p. 578. The "Wendic towns" at this time included Hamburg, Lübeck, Rostock, Stralsund, Wismar, and Lüneburg; Jacob Ulfsson to Svante Sture and councilors, Oct. 26, 1509; *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 596.

might come to Sweden.²² But within a month and following a visit to Stockholm of a Lübeck fleet under Hermann Messmann and Bernt Bomhouwer, the Swedish *riksråd* had made a treaty with Lübeck for mutual free trade as of old. From Danzig a Lübeck fleet brought back a substantial loan.²³ The technical justification for these arrangements lay in the fact that war had not been formally declared.

By 1510, Maximilian had heard from another section of his heterogeneous empire. The towns of the Netherlands, always important carriers of Baltic products, were demanding the right to pass through the Sound and to trade with Danish towns, but promised not to render armed assistance to Denmark. The emperor acquiesced in the demands. This new move could only lead to new dissensions within the Hansa towns, and was distinctly favorable to King John. Lübeck's reply was clear and unequivocal; Dutch ships passing through the Sound would do so at their own risk. But the Dutch were equally insistent; their fleet was ready, the emperor and the regent of the Netherlands had given their consent, and reprisals might be expected from interference.²⁴

On April 21, 1510, Lübeck and its allies finally declared formal war against Denmark.²⁵ In Sweden, the Union party was sufficiently silenced so that by September members of the Swedish *riksråd*, headed by the militant Danophobe, Hemming Gadh, of Linköping, decided on an alliance with the six Wendic towns.²⁶ A factor to which sufficient attention has not hitherto

²² *Aarsberetninger fra det kongelige Geheimearchiv* (7 vols.; Copenhagen, 1852-83), IV, 353; *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 580.

²³ Danzig to Lübeck, Dec. 6, 1509; *H.R.*, ser. 3, V, 607-8. The amount was 1,300 mark preuss.

²⁴ Maximilian's declaration on behalf of the Netherland towns, Jan. 26, 1510; *ibid.*, pp. 689-90. Maximilian to Lübeck, Jan. 27, 1510; *ibid.*, p. 690. Lübeck to Netherland towns, Mar. 17, 1510; *ibid.*, pp. 690-91. Amsterdam to Lübeck, April 10, 1510; *ibid.*, pp. 691-92. Amsterdam and *de andere watersteden* to Lübeck, April 13, 1510; *ibid.*, pp. 692-93. The emperor in his letter to Lübeck of Jan. 27, 1510, where he requested the town not to interfere in the trade of the Netherlands with Denmark, lists the provinces of Brabant, Flanders, Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, and Wasserland. There is, however, no evidence to indicate that Flemish ships participated in the sea battles that took place in the Baltic at this time.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 693-94.

²⁶ O. S. Rydberg, *Sverges Traktater med Främmande Magter* (5 vols.; Stockholm, 1877-96), III, 567-69; also printed in Styffe, *op. cit.*, V, 409-11, and in *H.R.*, ser. 3, VI, 27-28.

been given was no doubt the news from Russia. The vigilant Erik Turesson (Bjelke), from his vantage point of Wiborg on the Finnish-Russian frontier, sent word in July to Svante Sture of evidences of a Danish-Russian understanding that—to him—pointed clearly to a Russian attack on Finland. Early in the year, Danish, Swedish, and Lübeck envoys had been in Novgorod; and the Danish herald, “Master David,” was credited with a diplomatic victory.²⁷ Along with reports from Novgorod came news of the participation of the Fuggers and other non-Hanseates in the Narva trade. A letter from Dorpat to Reval written early in 1511 notes with concern that these outsiders may be aiming at taking over the Novgorod factory. In the autumn of that year, the Emperor Maximilian protested against the seizure by Lübeck of a cargo of Swedish copper that the Fuggers were attempting to freight from Danzig to the Netherlands, and adverted to the charge of the Hansa towns that the *grosz geselschaften* of Nuremberg and elsewhere were injuring their merchants.²⁸

The Lübeck-Swedish war against Denmark calls for no description here. Before peace had been concluded in April, 1512, terrific sea battles had taken place between the Lübeck and the Danish fleets, resulting in the retirement of the former to the Trave; but the Netherlands’ fleet of warships and merchant vessels had meantime been destroyed by the Lübeckers off Bornholm. Nevertheless, the *dominium maris Baltici* was, for the present, with King John.

In this desperate struggle, Lübeck had but little assistance from the other Hansa towns. From Danzig it received practically none. The destruction of the Netherland fleet was also a serious blow to Danzig, the entrepôt for the Dutch grain trade.

²⁷ *Handlingar rörande Skandinaviens historia*, XX, 287–91; David Kock (Cochrane), a Scotchman employed by both John and Christian II in numerous diplomatic missions to Russia and elsewhere, has left numerous traces of his activities in the documentary records, but no real study of his career has been made by scholars. See article on “Kock, David” by A. Heise in *Bricka’s Dansk Biografisk Lexikon* (19 vols.; Copenhagen, 1887–1905), IX, 319.

²⁸ In 1512 we find the Hansa factory at Bruges inveighing against the Danzig merchants who traded with the Fuggers, Welsers, and other large companies outside of the Hansa that threatened to gain a monopoly of the copper trade; *H.R.*, ser. 3, VI, 360. Maximilian to Hansa towns, Oct. 16, 1511; *ibid.*, pp. 259–60.

Danzig had supported Margrave Joachim of Brandenburg and Duke Bogislav of Pomerania in urging a peaceful settlement.²⁹ No sooner had peace been achieved by the Treaty of Malmö, in April, 1512, than Danzig again took up the Skåne fisheries dispute with Lübeck. The Danzig authorities tried at first to secure Archbishop Birger of Lund as umpire to determine the true boundaries, and then sent their local *Vogt* to Copenhagen to treat directly with the king and his council.³⁰ The decision was actually made by royal commissioners, in the presence of the Lübeck *Vogt*.³¹ Lübeck protested very naturally that the local magistrate had no authority, and that complaints should be brought, not before the Danish councilors, but before a meeting of the German towns.³² The award in favor of Danzig, as against Lübeck, was made on the technical basis that the latter had been unable to produce the original grant of privileges made by the Danish crown.

When Christian ascended the throne in 1513, he began by making friendly gestures toward Danzig. When Archduchess Isabella of Burgundy, sister of Archduke Charles, came to Denmark as the young king's bride, Danzig was invited to send two ships to bring the royal party to Copenhagen; and the king offered generous remuneration for the services.³³ But Danzig's victory proved in the long run to be an empty one. When the Swedish business reached a new and critical phase in 1518, the king suddenly raised the tolls in Skåne, and Danzig found itself paying more than the Wendic towns. For the past five years, Lübeck had been working to bring the *Fittenstreit* within the

²⁹ John to Danzig, Sept. 10, 1511; Danzig Staatsarchiv MSS, 300, Abt. 27, No. 8.

³⁰ Danzig to John, Aug. 7, 1512; *H.R.*, ser. 3, VI, 634, n. 1. Same to Christian, Aug. 5, 1513; Danzig SA MSS, 300, Abt. 27, No. 8. John to Danzig, Nov. 25, 1512; *ibid.*, Abt. 14, No. 302 (Hirsch reg.). Danzig to Birger, Aug. 5, 1513; *ibid.*, *Missirbuch*, pp. 385-87.

³¹ Jacob Parkow's account, Sept. 26, 1513; *H.R.*, ser. 3, VI, 479-80. Schäfer, pp. 39-40, par. 283-85. Complaints of Wendic towns against Denmark, June 1, 1515 (recapitulation), and n. 1; *H.R.*, ser. 3, VI, 633-36.

³² Lübeck to Danzig, Nov. 7, 1513; *H.R.*, ser. 3, VI, 634, n. 1. For further repercussions of the Danzig-Lübeck dispute, see Danzig SA MSS, 300, Abt. 27, No. 8, for Aug. 19, 1514, May 20, 1516, and Aug. 30, 1518.

³³ Danzig SA MSS, 14, 311-16 (Hirsch reg.), Oct. 18, 1514, Feb. 15, Feb. 18, June 22, and Aug. 23, 1515. Cf. Simson, *Geschichte der Stadt Danzig* (3 vols.; Danzig, 1913), I, 354.

jurisdiction of the Hanseatic diets; and finally, in 1518, the year of Christian's high tax, Danzig was practically isolated in the *Hansetag*. By 1519, the forbidden commerce with Sweden loomed larger than ever to the merchants of Danzig, and the Skåne herring trade shrank in importance. Danzig's hand was finally forced from a new quarter. The Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Albert of Prussia, was preparing for a war with Poland. Here was an opportunity to crush a rival of the east Prussian towns, and Denmark was invited to join and make war on Danzig.³⁴

Thus it came about that when the Lübeck envoys, headed by Bernt Bomhouwer, made the rounds of the north German towns from Wismar to Danzig early in 1522, they found the Danzigers ready for friendly negotiations. The prospect of opening up anew the trade with Sweden—even at the risk of a war with Christian II—the accumulated grievances resulting from the latter's high tolls and hindrances to trade, and the steps taken by Christian (apparently with the active assistance of the Fugger company of Augsburg) to establish a staple in Copenhagen and supplant the Hanseates in Novgorod finally convinced the Danzigers that they should make common cause with the men of Lübeck.³⁵

The Danish king's efforts, through his herald, David Cochran, to establish more direct trading relations with Russia were regarded by the German towns with grave concern. The Fuggers, who, like the Welsers and Hochsteters, were solidifying their position in Antwerp to the distress of Bruges, were thought by Reval to be privy to "Master David's" schemes.³⁶ The report that the Master of the Livonian Order, Walter von Plettenberg, was prepared to help the king shunt the Russian trade over Narva and Iwangorod did not lessen the fear that the princes were in league with one another against the towns. Not

³⁴ Copious materials for the history of Denmark's relations with Albert during 1510-25 are to be found in E. Joachim, *Die Politik des letzten Hochmeisters in Preussen, Albrecht von Brandenburg* (3 vols.; Leipzig, 1892-95).

³⁵ "Bericht der Lübischer Sendeboten," Feb. 7-Mar. 18, 1522; *H.R.*, ser. 3, VIII, 54-61.

³⁶ Reval to Lübeck, May 2, 1516; *H.R.*, ser. 3, VI, 773-74. Same to same, Apr. 26, 1522; *ibid.*, VIII, 98.

only did Reval and Riga³⁷ draw closer to their Hansa confederates as Christian's plans developed, but Danzig had visions of commercial decline as she saw Albert of Prussia, Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, draw closer to Denmark and make powerful efforts to throw the trade of the Polish-Lithuanian hinterland into the hands of the so-called "three towns" of Königsberg. Danzig's decision to play the game with the Wendic towns, and to help them make a breach in the cordon of princes that was threatening to strangle them all, thus becomes intelligible. Moreover, the immediate result justified their action. The treaty with Lübeck was concluded in April, 1522,³⁸ and Gustavus Vasa ascended the throne of an independent Sweden in the succeeding year. What the diplomacy of the Wendic towns and Sweden had been unable to accomplish, time and a combination of circumstances brought about.

Sweden's independence was achieved, not only by the efforts of the Swedish citizenry, but by the material help brought to Sweden in German merchant vessels sailing out from Lübeck and Danzig. It is a curious commentary on the power wielded in a crucial era by these two towns that when Duke Frederick of Gottorp succeeded his nephew, the deposed Christian II, as king of Denmark-Norway, he made use of a Hanseatic fleet to capture Zealand and the Danish capital from the adherents of the absent king. Thus, the intervention of the Hansa towns and Danzig in the affairs of Scandinavia at a critical time aided in bringing a new and powerful dynasty into northern Europe. When, with this aid, Sweden took its place as an independent state, the era of the Calmar Union—a century and a quarter of Scandinavian history—came to a definite close.

WALDEMAR WESTERGAARD

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES

³⁷ Riga reported to the Lübeck *Hansetag* in June-July, 1518, that the Fuggers and the great companies had captured the wax trade and held it; *ibid.*, VII, 211.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, VIII, 63-66; part of the text appears in Rydberg, *Sverges Traktater*, IV, 469-70.