

**Fourth Biennial Conference of the  
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**Many trump cards on hand: Networks and cooperation  
in Hanseatic world**

**Chair: Prof. Dr. Felicitas Schmieder, Historisches Institut, FernUniversität Hagen**

The Baltic Sea region together with neighbouring regions has played a key role in analysing historical connections between Central and Northern Europe. As a political and economic hub this region is characterised by the Hanseatic League, which has occupied a dominant place within historical research. As a strong and well-organized network in questions of politics, economy and trade, it has been regarded as THE shaping force in the region (not the least in Gdansk). However, the more potent and powerful the Hanseatic League is portrayed, the more other, equally important alliances and connections in the region fall behind. In our papers we challenge the omnipotence of the Hanseatic League, by focusing on network structures and interdependencies, which developed complementary, competitively or independently to the League. To what extent and in what way options for action were expanded or new conflicts arose, will be examined more closely in three case studies from the perspectives of politics, economics and religion. It is our aim to consider the Hanseatic region as open and interconnected to other parts of Europe, and thus discuss transregional and even long distance networks.

**Papers**

**M.A. Maria Seier, Historisches Institut, FernUniversität Hagen**

**With a little help from mighty friends: The “Lübecker Ratsstreit”, Council conflict 1403-1416.**

The council conflict in Lübeck in the early 15th century was by no means just an inner-city affair. In order to strengthen their respective positions through the support of external allies, both parties to the dispute relied on their political connections and networks. Within a very short time not only the surrounding cities and the Hanseatic League were involved in this conflict, but also noble and ecclesiastical dignitaries of the region, as well as the Roman king and the royal court. The paper will highlight the different levels of the political networks and deal with the problems caused by their close interlocking and overlapping.

**Dr. Anna Orłowska, Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warszawa**

**How to develop a trade network as a newcomer without getting married? The example of Danzig Merchant Johan Pyre**

Over the course of his business activities, Johan Pyre developed a multitude of networks that were only partially interwoven. As a merchant based in Danzig in the first half of the 15th century (1421-1455), he ran a typical Hanseatic business model connecting his partners from East, primarily Riga, to West, Lubeck and Bruges, but also engaged himself in the trade with English, Dutch and Lithuanian counterparts. Last but not least, he also established a large number of contacts within Prussia and especially within Danzig. The unique aspect of this case study is not only the fact, that it is based on the earliest preserved merchant book from this region, but additionally that the examined merchant managed to achieve this development neither by using his familiar connections nor by getting married. Isolating those factors allows us to better understand the role of the family in the work of Hanseatic merchants. This might prove advantageous for further developing our understanding of network formation in the Middle Ages, in general. In any case, Johan Pyre constitutes a highly valuable data point, which deserves a closer look.

**Dr. Anu Mänd, Institute of History, Archaeology and Art History, Tallinn University**

**Rome, Rostock and a remote region: Livonian bishops, their networks and art commissions**

Bishops with their affiliational and personal networks can be regarded as central 'actors' in any region of medieval Europe, including Livonia (a historical region roughly corresponding to modern Estonia and Latvia). This paper will focus on Livonian bishops and their networks in the 15th and the first half of the 16th century. The bishops had connections to Rome, studied at Italian and German universities, were connected to religious orders, travelled widely and left 'visual traces' in Europe. The paper will pay special attention to artworks located outside Livonia, but commissioned by (or for) the Livonian bishops. These artworks can be understood as visual testimonies to their wide-ranging networks, political and religious alliances, as well as strategies of self-representation.