

Trade, diplomacy and cultural exchange

Continuity and change in the North Sea area and the Baltic
c. 1350-1750

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Habsburg Diplomacy during the Holland-Wend War of 1510-1514

In 1510 the county of Holland was drawn into a war between the Wend towns along the Northern German coast and the kingdom of Denmark, which provoked a four-year interruption of all trade from the Habsburg Low Countries through the Sound.¹ Whilst Lübeck and the Wend cities² used the war to adopt an offensive strategy aimed at containing rival Dutch trade to the Baltic, Holland's cities and states preferred a diplomatic solution, which finally would result in the Conference of Bremen in September 1514. Nevertheless, the conflict of 1510-1514 has predominantly been analyzed in terms of the impact of sea wars in the continuous struggle for economic dominance in the Baltic.³ Even Tracy, who emphasizes the rather autonomous role of Holland's states in Baltic matters, focuses essentially on the role of military intervention as a means of pressuring for a redefinition of trading conditions.⁴ Such a position seems to overestimate the role of war in this context, since the military clashes between Hollanders and the Wends had, at least in the first half of the sixteenth century, no lasting impact on their trading relations in the region. The conflict under consideration here was resolved at the negotiation table in Bremen in 1514 where trading conditions between the two powers were fixed for the next decade.

Only Lahaine has paid substantial attention to the diplomatic relations between the Habsburg state and the Wend cities in the decades around 1500.⁵ Because his

- 1 Research for this article was made possible by a Post-Doc Grant from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO).
- 2 The Wend cities comprise, apart from Lübeck, the towns of Hamburg, Stralsund, Rostock, Wismar, Greifswald and Lüneburg.
- 3 L. Sicking, *Zeemacht en onmacht. Maritieme politiek in de Nederlanden, 1448-1558* (Amsterdam 1998) pp. 107-110. K. Fritze, G. Krause, *Seekriege der Hanse. Das erste Kapitel deutsche Seekriegsgeschichte* (Berlin 1997²) pp. 147-154, although the relevant chapter essentially focuses on the war with Denmark.
- 4 J.D. Tracy, *Holland under Habsburg rule. The formation of a body politic* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford 1990) pp. 106-107.
- 5 L. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland van 1474 bis 1525', *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, 24 (*henceforth HGBll*) (1918).

analysis predominantly relied on edited Hanseatic sources with a only few references to Dutch material, his conclusions tend to represent the Wend point of view. The gap was partially filled by James Ward, whose unpublished dissertation is oriented towards an analysis of the political influence of Holland's cities and states between 1506-1515.⁶ His narrow focus on the interaction between cities and states resulted in the remarkable omission of any discussion of the Bremen Conference. An examination of the evolution of the relations between the Hanse and Habsburg is also missing here. Such a state of affairs invites us to aim to establish, by combining Hanseatic and Dutch sources, the extent that the diplomatic involvement of the Habsburg state in the protection of Holland's commercial interests provoked a re-definition of the trading relations between the Low Countries and the Wend cities in the Baltic. This case study will thus contribute to the debate on the impact of the Burgundian-Habsburg state on the prolonged demise of the German Hanse.⁷

War between Denmark and Lübeck

The conflict between Holland and Lübeck had its roots in a conflict between Denmark and Lübeck. War between the latter two powers broke out in 1509 as a consequence of King Hans's anti-Hanseatic policies following the decision by the Wend cities to support the Swedish rebellion against the Danish crown. In 1497 King Hans had already crushed a rebellion led by the Swedish nobleman Sven Sture, who had waged a campaign to dismantle the Kalmar Union of 1397, according to which Norway and Sweden were under the Danish crown. In 1499, the Oldenburg dynasty reinforced its position in Scandinavia as Christian, the eldest son of King Hans and intended successor to the Danish crown, was made viceroy in Norway. Having secured his position in the north, King Hans then attempted to subdue the fairly autonomous region of Ditmarschen in Schleswig-Holstein.⁸ The king's authority was shaken after a humiliating defeat by the peasants of Ditmarschen at Hemmingstadt in 1500. Uprisings in Norway and Sweden were the result. While Christian quickly restored order in Norway, the rebellion in Sweden proved to be more successful, as the Swedish regent Sven Sture succeeded in building a coalition with the German Order, Livonia and the Wend cities. The Danish king thereupon invoked the support of Emperor Maximilian of Austria in 1502 and found an ally in Lübeck, which had refused to join the Wends in the Swedish coalition.

6 J.P. Ward, *The Cities and States of Holland (1506-1515). A participative system of government under strain* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Leiden 2001) pp. 198-202.

7 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 279. W. Stein, 'Die Burgunderherzöge und die Hanse', *HGBll.* 10 (1901) pp. 14-15. K. Pagel, *Die Hanse* (Braunschweig 1952) pp. 252-256. K. Spading, *Holland und die Hanse im 15. Jahrhundert* (Weimar 1973) pp. 167-180 [Abhandlungen zur Handels- und Sozialgeschichte. Band XII]

8 J. Glete, 'Naval power and control of the sea in the Baltic in the sixteenth century', in J.B. Hattendorf, R.W. Unger (eds.) *War at Sea in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Woodbridge 2003) pp. 220-221. H. Stoob, *Die Hanse* (Graz, Cologne, Vienna 1995) p. 279.

tion.⁹ With the help of Lübeck's fleet, a trading blockade against Sweden was established, forcing the rebels to accept an imposed peace treaty in 1509.¹⁰

King Hans countered Wend support for Sven Sture by issuing a general prohibition against Hanseatic trade with Sweden in 1505. He simultaneously started favouring commercial relations with the provinces of Holland, Zeeland and Brabant in the Low Countries as well as with the English, Scots and French in an attempt to increase pressure on the Wends. As a result, the Hollanders were granted free access through the Sound. Danish commercial policy was a central issue during a Wend Diet in 1506, where the assembly voiced its fears concerning King Hans's intentions to limit Hanseatic influence in Denmark.¹¹ The king clearly played on resentment among the Danish citizenry, who sensed that the privileged position of the German Hanse within the kingdom was a barrier to its own economic development. As a result, the Danes were extremely reluctant to grant new privileges to Hanse merchants and attacks on Hanseatic vessels increased. The ward of the Hanse on Scania was subjected to arbitrary decision-making, whilst competitors of the Wends saw their position in Denmark strengthened.¹² Nonetheless, Lübeck made an effort to prevent the outbreak of war between the Wends and Denmark through the ratification of the treaty of Nykjöbing in 1507. Lübeck promised to help the Danes make the trade blockade against Sweden effective, implying that it would allow its ships to be searched by the Danish fleet.¹³ However, anti-Hanseatic policies in Denmark hardened when in 1508 Christian decided to cut short Rostock's privileges in Norway and undermined Hanseatic dominance in Bergen by granting its citizens new trading privileges the following year.¹⁴ The multiple captures and searches of Hanseatic vessels was the final straw. In the summer of 1509, Lübeck declared war upon Denmark, but found itself initially isolated as the Wend cities and Hamburg refused to join in. The Wend Diet of August, which was dedicated to formulating war tactics against Denmark, made clear that the cities regarded the war as a matter which exclusively involved Lübeck and Denmark. Lübeck only succeeded in convincing the Wends to join the war in the winter of 1510. Hamburg, however, remained on the sidelines and only contributed financial support.¹⁵

9 Stob, *Die Hanse*, 280. F. Vollbeh, *Die Holländer und die Deutsche Hanse* (Lübeck 1930) p. 60. [Pfungstblätter des Hansischen Geschichtsvereins, XXI]

10 Stob, *Die Hanse*, p. 280. Lübeck was the only Wend city to support Denmark. The other Wend cities helped to equip the Swedish fleet.

11 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', pp. 235-237.

12 Fritze, Krause, *Seekriege der Hanse*, p. 148. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 236.

13 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', pp. 238-239.

14 H. Kellenbenz, 'Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Europas 1350-1650', in H. Kellenbenz (ed.) *Handbuch der europäischen Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte*. Bd. 3 (Stuttgart 1986) p. 244.

15 Fritze, Krause, *Seekriege der Hanse*, pp. 148-149. Glete, 'Naval power', p. 222. Vollbeh, *Die Holländer* p. 63. Tracy, *Holland under Habsburg rule*, p. 106 suggests that after the outbreak of the war, Holland granted its support to King Hans of Denmark. It was the main reason for Lübeck to impose a Sound blockade. See also J.C.A de Meij, 'Oorlogsvaart, kaapvaart en zeeroof', in G. Aseart, J. van Beylen and H.P.H. Jansen (eds.) *Maritieme Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, I (Bussum 1976) p. 321.

The Sound Blockade

Lübeck had started its diplomatic offensive against Denmark much earlier, having succeeded in convincing the emperor that King Hans intended to extend his influence over northern Germany and Lübeck in particular. Its efforts resulted in a remarkable change in Habsburg policy with far-reaching consequences for the Low Countries. In the winter of 1509, the emperor appealed to the German princes and cities along the German coast not to support the Danish king and in February provided Lübeck with a mandate to apply a general trading prohibition on Denmark, which paved the way for a Sound blockade.¹⁶ The radical change in Habsburg policy triggered a long conflict between the Wends and the county of Holland.¹⁷ Probably with an eye on the truce with the Low Countries, signed in 1508, Lübeck kept the imperial mandate secret for about nine months.¹⁸ The major towns in Holland were only informed on 19 November 1509, which led to speculation that Lübeck had deliberately provoked a conflict in order to damage the trading interests of the Low Countries in the Baltic.¹⁹ Consciously exploiting the emperor's support, Lübeck called for solidarity from Holland's States and towns.²⁰ Meanwhile, Lübeck started patrolling the Sound entrance and issued warnings that it would attack ships trying to break the blockade.²¹ Nonetheless it allowed free access to the Belt passage, which was, however, an empty gesture, as the Danish king had already forbidden the use of this waterway in 1451 in order to prevent circumvention of the Sound Tolls.²²

As the blockade closed the most important gateway to the Baltic, Holland, Amsterdam and the so-called 'Watercities' along the Suydersee coast called for immediate action. With the approval of Holland's States a delegation was sent to the regent, Margaret of Austria, with the task of pleading for a withdrawal of the imperial

- 16 D. Schäfer (ed.) *Hanserecesse von 1477-1530. Dritter Abteilung. Fünfter Band* (Leipzig 1890) pp. 692 nr. 567 and pp. 694-695 nr. 570 (henceforth HR III/5). National Archives (henceforth NA) The Hague Archives of Holland's Estates before 1572 (henceforth ASH) inv. 2406a fol. 44. Maximilian issued an ordinance addressed to Zwolle and the other Dutch Hanseatic cities in which he forbade trading relations with Denmark. Municipal Archives (henceforth MA) Zwolle Oud Stadsarchief Ch. 509.16.M
- 17 L. Sicking, *Zeemacht en onmacht*, p. 109. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland' p. 241-256. Tracy, *Holland under Habsburg rule*, p. 106. Fritze, Krause, *Seekriege der Hanse*, pp. 148-149. Glete, 'Naval power', p. 221.
- 18 NA The Hague ASH inv. 53. The treaty was signed during a Diet at Bergen op Zoom on 12 December and was to end at Christmas 1510.
- 19 NA The Hague ASH inv. 54; inv. 2406a fol. 44-44v0. HR III/5, pp. 606-607 nr. 512. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 242. Fritze, Krause, *Seekriege der Hanse*, p. 148
- 20 In a letter from 20 May 1511, Lübeck once again referred to its plans. MA Dordrecht Oud Archief inv. 2 brief no. 82. D. Schäfer (ed.) *Hanserecesse von 1477-1530. Dritter Abteilung. Sechster Band* (Leipzig 1899) p. 109 nr. 166 (Henceforth HR III/6). Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 200.
- 21 Sicking, *Zeemacht en onmacht*, p. 109.
- 22 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', 243 and note 1. E. Daenell, *Die Blütezeit der Hanse*, II (Berlin 1973²) p. 167. NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406 fol. 44-44v0. For Dutch captains trespassing in the Belt in the 16th century see Statens Arkive Kopenhagen, Rigsarkivet inv. 301 Tyske Kancelli A II Niederlande

mandate. The States also stressed Holland's neutrality in an attempt to protect the Low Countries' trading interests in the Baltic.²³ On 26 January 1510, the emperor cancelled the mandate. He explained his decision by pointing out that he had been inadequately informed and emphasized that he had never intended to harm Dutch trading interests in such a fundamental way. Lübeck thereupon received orders to promise merchants from Holland, Flanders and Brabant free access to Danish waters and the Baltic. However, the emperor simultaneously forbade his subjects from providing financial or military support to the Danish king.²⁴

The Lübeck magistrate disregarded the emperor's order²⁵ and even tried to reinforce the blockade by requesting in March 1510 that Danzig stop all traffic heading west.²⁶ In letters sent to Amsterdam, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Zierikzee and Veere, the Travetown repeated its initial threats and refused all responsibility for damages inflicted on ships attempting to break the blockade.²⁷ Amsterdam, which in several regional Diets expressed a common policy with the Watercities, tried to take the initiative. In a letter from 10 April, Amsterdam announced that a merchant fleet was ready to set sail for the Baltic and underlined that it acted entirely in accordance with the emperor's revocation of the 1509 mandate. The towns invoked both Holland's neutrality as well as the emperor's authority in international trading matters. They even offered to mediate between Denmark and Lübeck. In a second letter, Amsterdam and the Watercities expressed their surprise at being involved in a conflict which had nothing to do with them.²⁸ About the same time, Holland's States, and representatives of the regent, started negotiations with the Elders of the Hanse kontor in Bruges, which maintained diplomatic contacts on behalf of the German Hanse in the Low Countries.²⁹ The advocate of Holland at the Supreme Court in The Hague, Frans Coebel,³⁰ was unable to obtain a prolongation of the truce agreed upon in Bergen op Zoom in 1508, which probably would have calmed things down. According to a memoir written in 1514, the 'Oldermannen' argued not being authorized to renew the treaty. Even the intervention of the regent's trustee Roeland

23 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a, fol. 44v0.

24 HR III/5, pp. 689-690 nrs. 563-564. NA The Hague ASH inv. 55 and inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 44v0. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 242.

25 The Habsburg messenger who delivered the revocation to the Lübeck Council was immediately sent home without receiving an answer. NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 45.

26 HR III/5, pp. 702-704 nr. 581. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', pp. 242-243.

27 HR III/5, pp. 690-691 nr. 565. NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 45.

28 HR III/5, pp. 691-692 nr. 566-567

29 V. Henn, 'Das Brügger Kontor' in J. Bracker, V. Henn and R. Postel (eds.) *Die Hanse. Wirklichkeit und Mythos* (Lübeck 1999³) pp. 216-223.

30 Frans Coebel (c. 1470-1532) was appointed Advocate of the Common Land in 1500 and was dismissed in 1512, probably as a result of accusations that he was not adequately presenting the views of the States and those of the separate cities in particular. See Ward, *Cities and States*, 54-56. H.P. Fölting, 'De Landsadvocaten en Raadspensionarissen van de Staten van Holland en West-Friesland, 1480-1795', *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie en het Iconografisch Bureau*, 27 (The Hague 1973) pp. 299, 307-311.

van Moerkerken did not change their attitude.³¹ Lübeck refused to yield under the growing diplomatic pressure and succeeded in convincing the Wend towns of the necessity of a prolonged blockade.³² The cities even pressed Lübeck to proceed with an official complaint against the imperial revocation, thereby indicating that the gap between the positions of each party was unbridgeable.

The Habsburg Diplomatic Counteroffensive

Around Pentecost 1510, the gap widened even further as merchants and skippers from the Low Countries, who had resumed trading contracts in the Baltic, were attacked by warships from Stralsund and Lübeck near the coasts of Greifswald and Helsingör. About 32 ships originating from various ports in Holland, Zeeland and Brabant were impounded. Total damages amounted to approximately 100,000 guilders.³³ At the request of the cities and States, the regent immediately took diplomatic action by sending her councillor Jean Suquet³⁴ to Lübeck and the other Wend cities in order to restore peace and to demand the restitution of the captured ships and commodities.³⁵ His detailed instructions leave no doubt that the emperor had distanced himself from Lübeck and its allies. Not only had the Wends refused to obey the emperor's orders, they also had taken the law into their own hands rather than settling the dispute with Holland before the imperial courts. Suquet was finally instructed to be extremely clear concerning the support Maximilian would give his subjects in order to obtain compensation for all damages.³⁶ Despite this, the am-

31 Roeland van Moerkerken, member of the noble family originating from "het Vrije van Brugge" or the Bruges Quarter, had begun his career around 1497 as a councillor and master of requests at the Supreme Council in Malines. From 1504 on he served the duke as a master of requests and fulfilled various diplomatic missions for the regent in 1509 and 1510. A.J.M. Kerckhoffs-de Hey, *De Grote Raad en zijn functionarissen 1477-1531. II Biografieën van Raadsheren* (Amsterdam 1980) p. 99.

32 HR III/5, pp. 726-727 nr. 610 § 7.

33 Sicking, *Zeemacht en onmacht*, 109. Fritze, Krause, *Seekriege der Hanse, 172-174*. The capture is mentioned in Haarlem's city accounts: MA Haarlem, Tresrek. 1509-1510 fol. 28-28vo. Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 198 note 454. Eight ships from Hoorn, Enkhuizen and elsewhere from Waterland were taken near Greifswald, whilst another eleven ships originating from Zierikzee and Antwerp were arrested near Helsingör. See Theodorus Velius, *Chronyck vande stadt van Hoorn* (ed. S. Dijkstra, W. Vingerhoed) (s.p.s.d.) pp. 90-91. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', pp. 243-244 mentions captures of ships charged with salt, charcoal and Leiden cloth close to Rügen and Scania. The Memoir of 1514 states that 32 or 33 vessels were taken. NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 45vo. In Reval (present-day Tallinn) ships from Schiedam were arrested. On 28 March, the regent sent a request for restitution of these vessels. MA Tallin inv. 230.1.BB.6.II. 216. Compare the rather inaccurate view of De Meij, 'Oorlogsvaart', p. 23.

34 Jean Suquet (1460-11522) was since 1493 a councillor at the Supreme Council in Malines. He fulfilled various diplomatic missions for the regent and the emperor at the Danish Court. In 1521 he was sent to Stockholm to hand over the Golden Fleece collier to Christian II of Denmark. Kerckhoffs-De Hey, *De Grote Raad*, p. 143.

35 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 45-45vo.

36 Ibidem, inv. 2406a Instructie Suquet (June 1510). Compare HR III/6, pp. 262-263 note 1, with wrong dates. Also Dirc Claeszn. from Amsterdam was a delegation member. Idem, inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 59.

bassador returned empty-handed, reporting in September before the assembled Estates in Holland that Lübeck and its allies had no intention of changing their attitude.³⁷ A second delegation met the same fate. At the request of Margaret of Austria, the emperor issued a new mandate in which restitution of the captured ships was demanded on penalty of a fine of 200 marc lead. Maximilian had trusted his herald IJsselstein with the task of providing Lübeck and Stralsund with copies of the mandate, but even the threat that the cities would fall into disfavour with the emperor failed to impress the Wends.³⁸

Lübeck even inflamed the situation by convincing its ally Sweden to declare war upon Holland in an attempt, as the Estates put it later, 'to dissipate the Hollanders and other subjects of our merciful Lord from the trade of the seas'.³⁹ The Swedish declaration was the result of an alliance between the Wends and Sweden, signed and confirmed one month earlier during a Wend Regional Diet.⁴⁰ Around the time that the Swedish letters of *ontseghinge* or annulment of the former peaceful relations reached Holland and Sweden, a Danish delegation arrived in The Hague on 9 November. It carried a royal request for military help against the Wends. King Hans explained his mission by pointing to the excellent relations between the Low Countries and Denmark, which were underpinned by a former treaty of mutual aid signed by Charles the Bold and the king of Denmark.⁴¹ Both matters were discussed during a Diet at the end of November in The Hague. All major cities, with the exception of Amsterdam, declared themselves to be in favour of a peaceful resolution of the conflict. They proposed to send a delegation to the regent, composed of representatives of all major cities, advising her to enforce, through diplomatic action, free access to the Sound and the Baltic.⁴² The council of the city of Leiden even instructed its representatives not to approve proposals to start a war against the Wends under any circumstances.⁴³

On 1 February 1511, delegates from Holland and Zeeland met in Antwerp to prepare for further negotiations with the regent in Malines. The representatives agreed to press for the confiscation of Wend commodities in all Habsburg provinces of the Low Countries and for permission to equip a marine convoy consisting of eight vessels, with a thousand men aboard. The fleet was to offer support to the Danish king in order to prevent him reaching an agreement with the Wends which would damage the trading interests of the Low Countries.⁴⁴ The central

37 Ibidem, inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 46. HR III/6, pp. 71-72, nr. 95.

38 Ibidem, inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 45vo.

39 Ibidem, inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 46-46vo. '*die van Hollandt ende andere ondersaten myns genadichste heeren vuyt der neringe vander zee te verdriven ende te veriaegen*'.

40 Fritze, Krause, *Seekriege der Hanse*, p. 149.

41 Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 198, note 456. HR III/6, pp. 71-72 nr. 95. NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 44-47vo. Regional Archives (henceforth RA) Leiden SA.I inv. 383 Vroedschapboek 1508-1522, fol. 24 (11-11-1510). MA Haarlem Vroedschapsres. 1501-1516, fol. 65-65vo.

42 See for the declarations of the Leiden delegation to this Diet: Regional Archives Leiden inv. 590 Tresrek. 1511, fol. 39vo. (henceforth RA Leiden)

43 RA Leiden SA.I inv. 383 Vroedschapboek 1508-1522, fol. 86.

44 Sicking, *Zeemacht en onmacht*, p. 100. Tracy, *Holland under Habsburg rule*, p. 106. Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 199.

Habsburg government reacted quickly. On 3 February, the regent received the imperial mandate needed to proceed with the arrest of the Wend merchants residing in the Low Countries, as well as with the confiscation of their commodities.⁴⁵ The very same day, the emperor ordered his master of requests, Jean de la Truye,⁴⁶ to produce a reliable assessment of the extent of the damages inflicted upon Dutch merchants. On 18 February, the emperor charged the president of the Privy Council in the Low Countries, Jean Carondelet,⁴⁷ with the task of supervising the confiscation of Wend commodities up to a total value of 100,000 guilders.⁴⁸ Finally, on 16 March, the emperor informed Lübeck that he had allowed his subjects from Holland, Zeeland and Brabant to resume trade with Denmark on the condition that they would not supply the Danish king with weapons or ships.⁴⁹

Adequate centralized decision-making in Brussels was, however, hampered by regional differences. The imperial decision to proceed with the confiscation of the commodities of Wend merchants in Flanders gave rise to strong protests from Flanders' Four Members, as its States were called. The imperial measures notably posed a threat to Bruges's commercial interests. As a staple for high value commodities transported along the east-west axis, the city held a key position in the Hanseatic trading system and depended on good relations with Lübeck and the Wends.⁵⁰ The Four Members successfully complained before the Grand Council in Malines, indicating in this way that conditions for the implementation of a coherent trading policy in the Low Countries were not yet fulfilled.⁵¹

The equipping and financing of the planned convoy triggered controversy among the States of Holland. Gouda's council resolutions of 15 and 20 February in particular reveal the lack of uniformity in the standpoints of the various towns. Initially, the council of Gouda opted for a war against the Wends and the Swedes on condition that all coastal provinces, including Brabant and Flanders, participated on an equal basis. On 20 February, a combination of such forces proved to be unlikely and this obliged the council to annul the former resolution. It now agreed that during the next Diet its representatives would propose equipping eight vessels

45 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 245

46 He might be the same person as Jean aux Truyes who was an advocate at the Supreme Council in Malines about 1494. In 1505 he was appointed Councillor in this Council and resigned in 15120 as he accepted membership of the Privy Council in 1520. He fulfilled various diplomatic missions among which his mediation together with Jean Suquet in a conflict among Malines' butchers in 1520. He died in 1541. Kerckhoffs-De Hey, *De Grote Raad*, p. 149.

47 Jean Carondelet (1469-1545) started his career as dean of Besançon and Councillor in the Council of Burgundy. He served the duke as a master of requests at his court from about 1495. In 1504 he was an ordinary Councillor at the Supreme Council in Malines and a member of the Privy Council since 1508. In 1522 he accepted the office of president of the latter. Kerckhoffs-De Hey, *De Grote Raad*, p. 41.

48 HR III/6, p. 73 nr. 99.

49 HR III/6, p. 99 nr. 111.

50 See for example P. Stabel, 'Bruges and the German Hanse: Brokering European Commerce', in Luc François and Ann Katharine Isaacs (eds.) *The Sea in European History* (Pisa 2001) pp. 35-55.

51 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 250. Sicking, *Zeemacht en onmacht*, p. 110. See also HR III/6, pp. 299-230 nr. 321.

against Lübeck and Sweden, to be financed by revenue from the *lastgeld*, a tax on shipped commodities and herring catches. This position was shared by the cities of Leiden and Haarlem.⁵² Such a reaction indicates that the towns which were not directly affected by the capture of vessels refused to take on a financial role in equipping the fleet. They put the burden on the shoulders of the merchants and fishermen who had a direct interest in the restoration of trading relations with the Baltic.⁵³

The correspondence between the regent and the noblemen Nassau, Chièvres, Tamse and Berghes, who were meticulously informed on the decision-making process in Holland and Brabant, reveals how deep the fissures ran. Margaret of Austria wrote that because of the '*diversité d'opinion*' between the towns of Holland, Zierikszee in Zeeland and Antwerp, she was forced to interrupt further negotiations and had ordered them '*qu'ilz se retirassent chacun en son quartier pour communiqués plusavant de cest affaire*'.⁵⁴ As even after the intervention of the Council of Holland common ground remained elusive, the cities decided to '*redigé par escript les opinions de ceulx qui se sont trouvez contraires*' and sent these to the regent. After having invoked the advice of the Supreme Council in Malines, Margaret informed the above-mentioned nobility of her decision and ordered them to convey her response to the emperor, so that he could take appropriate measures '*au bien soulagement et consolacion des pays et subjects dessuditz*'. The nobles were also asked to establish whether the treaties signed by the king of Denmark and Margaret's grandfather Charles the Bold were suitable to be prolonged.⁵⁵ Their findings would form a directive guiding Maximilian's decision to refrain from providing military support to Denmark.

On 6 May, the emperor reached a final decision and ordered the construction of a fleet of only four warships, to be paid for from the *lastgeld* incomes. The cities of Amsterdam, Zierikszee, Hoorn and Edam, whose merchants and ship captains had been victims of the captures at Greifswald and Helsingör, were expected to furnish the equipment. The squire Aernt van Duvenvoorde was appointed captain-general and received instructions indicating that he was to command the merchant fleet, which was to be guided through the Sound by his convoy. Delivering aid to Den-

52 M. Rollin Coukerque, A. Meerkamp van Embden, 'Goudsche vroedschapsresoluties', *Bijdragen Historisch Genootschap XXXVII* (1916) pp. 72-73. Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 199. RA Leiden SA.I inv. 383 Vroedschapboek 1508-1522, fol. 89 (11-02-1511).

53 Around this time, the Hanseatic merchants in Bruges informed Lübeck about rumours that eight warships were to be equipped – of which two were to be equipped by Amsterdam, one by Hoorn, one by Enkuizen, the other Watercities would equip two and Antwerp and Zierikszee one each. The letter underlined the fact that these cities were acting on their own behalf, since the other town councils had no intention of being involved in this matter. HR III/6, p. 111 nr. 173. Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 200.

54 L.P.C. van den Bergh (ed.) 'Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche avec ses amis sur les affaires des Pays-Bas de 1506-1528', in *Gedenkstukken tot opheldering der Nederlandsche geschiedenis, opgezameld uit de archieven te Rijssel en op gezag van het gouvernement uitgegeven*, III: 1506-1511 (The Hague 1842) pp. 254-258.

55 *Ibidem*.

mark was, however, forbidden.⁵⁶ The emperor wanted to maintain the neutral position of the Low Countries and refused to approve measures which threatened to compromise the still ongoing negotiations with the Wends.

In the meantime, diplomatic contacts had been made at the highest level but had failed to produce the anticipated results. On 26 April 1511, Lübeck informed its ally Rostock that it had attended the Reichstag in Strasbourg six months earlier. After talks with ambassadors from Denmark and the Low Countries, a common Diet in Hamburg on 24 June was envisaged. The Duke of Brandenburg was to act as a mediator and received instructions to establish a six-month truce between the Wend towns and Denmark. In addition, the emperor demanded the restitution of the ships belonging to the Hollanders and other subjects in the Low Countries and announced the implementation of free trade in the Baltic for all parties, Sweden included.⁵⁷ The Conference was rescheduled for Lüneburg on 17 June, but was finally cancelled because of a lack of finance, as an intended representative from the Low Countries noted.⁵⁸ In March 1511, the emperor had already made a renewed attempt to restore trading relations between Holland and Denmark. Provided with instructions from Holland's States, Maximilian of Zevenbergen entered into negotiations with delegations from Lübeck and Denmark. Despite his assurance that Holland would refrain from delivering support to Denmark, apparently nothing was achieved.⁵⁹

The Battle of Hella and its Consequences

In the meantime, the Danish-Wend war flared up again when, in March, warships from Lübeck captured forty Danish merchant vessels. Denmark reacted forcefully and its fleet appeared in the Trave estuary on 1 June, landing a force which started to pillage the area surrounding Lübeck. Later, the Wends accused Amsterdam and Enkhuizen of having supported the Danish attack and seriously questioned Holland's neutrality in the conflict.⁶⁰ The Wends reacted by equipping a fleet which started patrolling the entrance of the Sound. Its commanders Fritz Grawert and Hermann Falke, both members of the Lübeck council, received instructions to allow ships from Hamburg, Danzig and England to use the Sound passage, which

56 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406. Sicking, *Zeemacht en onmacht*, p. 110. Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 200. J. ter Gouw, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam*, III (Amsterdam 1881-1884) p. 348.

57 HR III/6, p. 99 nr. 141.

58 Ibidem, p. 109 nr. 166. NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406.

59 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a, fol. 46vo.

60 HR III/6, pp. 589-590 nr. 626 § 61. In 1522, in the instructions of a Habsburg delegation sent to Copenhagen, the emperor indeed admitted providing support to Denmark ('*in den crich tuschen uwer C.W. (Christian II) heer ende vaderende den wenschen steden uwer C.W. heer ende vader merkelick hulp gedaen ende daer duer in groten nachteyl gevallen...*' . . .) Statens Arkiver Kopenhagen Rigsarkivet inv. 301 Tyske Kancelli A II Akter vedr. Øresundstolden (1522).

suggests that the renewed blockade was exclusively directed against the Low Countries.⁶¹

Before the blockade came into effect the Dutch trading convoy had sailed through the Sound under the protection of the Danish admiral Jens Holgerse Ulfstand. After having finished business in Riga, Reval and elsewhere in the Eastern Baltic, the fleet joined ships that had wintered in the harbour at Danzig.⁶² Laden with ashes, wood, grain and large amounts of copper, about 250 vessels originating from Holland, Zeeland, Frisia, Denmark, Antwerp, Hamburg and Kampen set course for their home ports.⁶³ On 9 August, a Wend fleet joined battle with the Danes close to the Isle of Bornholm, the latter being forced to retreat when they lost their flagship. The Wends then set out to attack the poorly defended Dutch merchant fleet. On 11 August, the Dutch fleet was dispersed and partially destroyed at the Isle of Hella near the coast of Pommeren. Losses were enormous with about forty merchant vessels forcibly stranded and either sunk or captured, and their cargoes sold in Lübeck.⁶⁴ Amsterdam estimated that damages equalled a sum of about 100,000 pounds. In Hoorn estimates ran to 20,000 pounds.⁶⁵ The incident made clear that the naval capacities of the Low Countries were inadequate to protect their merchant fleet and forced Amsterdam to issue prohibitions on Baltic navigation in December 1511 and in May 1512.⁶⁶ It also indicated that Holland's trading interests could only be saved by skilful diplomacy.

Surprisingly, the incident at Hella did not trigger immediate countermeasures in Holland. The towns and Estates gathered for the first time after the event in January 1512 to discuss the equipping of a convoy to protect the merchant and the fishing fleet. Again the cities refused to participate directly and preferred to provide finance through the *lastgeld*.⁶⁷ The city of Haarlem was particularly reluctant and did not even attend the Diet in Malines. In the preparatory council meeting, Haarlem's local rulers imposed the rather unrealistic condition that all provinces had to participate. The city also demanded that the regent take the initiative in addressing a marine policy.⁶⁸ Leiden's vote was determined by its local economic interests and in particular the maintenance of its cloth industry. It limited itself to asking the regent to continue the peace treaties with England and Denmark in order to prevent

61 Fritze, Krause, *Seekriege der Hanse*, p. 152. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', pp. 246-247.

62 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 245.

63 Ibidem, pp. 246-247. With regard to the copper cargo, which was owned by the Fuggers, see Ph. Dollinger, *Die Hanse* (Stuttgart 1998³) pp. 409-413.

64 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406, fol. 46vo.-47.

65 HR III/6, pp. 255-257 nr. 214. J.J. Altmeyer, *Histoire des relations commerciales et diplomatiques avec le nord de l'Europe* (Paris, Bonn 1840) pp. 43-44. Sicking, *Zeemacht en onmacht*, p. 100. Tracy, *Holland under Habsburg rule*, p. 106. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', pp. 247-248. In his chronicle of Hoorn, Velius accuses the Danes of a weak performance. Velius, *Chronijck*, pp. 90-91.

66 L. Sicking, 'Die offensive Lösung. Militärische Aspekte des holländischen Ostseehandels im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert', *HGBll.*, 117 (1999) 45-46. Ter Gouw, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam* III, pp. 329-330. HR III/6, p. 325 nr. 312.

67 RA Leiden SA I 383 Vroedschapboek 1508-1522, fol. 108 (19-01-1512).

68 Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 202.

imports of wool and exports of cloth being threatened. The city council had, however, refused to contribute to the costs of the protection of the merchant fleet. The cities finally argued that the Estates would not participate in financing the project.⁶⁹

As a result of the increasing threat posed by a combined Lübeck-Stralsund fleet, deployed in the Baltic and the North Sea from the end of June 1512, councillor Jean Suquet was obliged on behalf of the regent to introduce new defensive plans during a Diet of the Estates in The Hague. The councillor asked for an answer before 11 September, but once again came up against the combined opposition of the assembled cities. Leiden's council, for example, shelved the matter as it argued that it was far too late in the sailing season to allow effective action at sea.⁷⁰ Such an attitude suggests that the incident at Hella had not led the cities and Estates to address the issue of a common naval policy. Urban councils tended to act according to their private economic interests. Even attempts by Amsterdam to reach a diplomatic solution met resistance. On 12 March 1512, Haarlem had refused to adhere to Amsterdam's proposal to send a delegation to Lübeck at the cost of the county. Only during the Diets, which were organized in June and July to discuss protection of the fisheries fleet, Leiden did grudgingly agree to make a financial contribution to sending a delegation to Lübeck and the Baltic cities.⁷¹

The Negotiations Resumed

Despite the Wend victory at Bornholm and Hella, popular support for the war against Denmark diminished. The interruption of mercantile traffic through the Sound had a negative impact on the local economies and allowed rival ports such as Danzig to reinforce their positions in the Baltic to the detriment of the Wend cities.⁷² Another complicating factor was the weakening position of the rebels in Sweden, which resulted in a rapprochement between Swedish Council members and the Danish crown. Such developments forced Lübeck into a more cautious policy. Negotiations with the Danish king resulted in the peace treaty of Malmö, signed on 23 April 1512. The treaty has been considered disadvantageous for the Wends, since it contained no new trading privileges for the Hanse or measures to contain Dutch competition in the region.⁷³ Still, the king agreed to maintain a neutral position in the trading conflict with the Habsburg Low Countries.

69 RA Leiden SA I 383 Vroedschapboek 1508-1522, fol. 117. Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 201-202.

70 RA Leiden SA I 383 Vroedschapboek 1508-1522, fol. 127. '... roerende instructie over gesonden bijden ambassadeur van den keijzer wesende ter Lubeke, . . . dat die van Lubeke den harincman sullen overvallen ende beschadigen, gesloten dat den tijt nu ter zeer verlopen is en de te laet is om eenige scepen van oirloge ...'. The Diets were held on 19 August and 7 September.

71 Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 202.

72 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 245.

73 Fritze, Krause, *Seekriege der Hanse*, pp. 153-154. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 249. Vollbehr, *Die Holländer*, p. 63. Compare Glete, 'Naval power', p. 222 who suggests that as a consequence of the Malmö treaty, the Wends were obliged to interrupt their attempts to chase the Hollanders from the Baltic.

With regard to this conflict, the Wends gave opposing signals. On 1 April 1512, the Wend Diet decided to declare war upon Holland, but it simultaneously kept the door open for further negotiations, asking Bremen to act as a mediator.⁷⁴ The declaration of war was in other words a means to increase pressure on the Habsburg Low Countries, since the Wends doubtlessly realized that a balanced redefinition of the trading conditions in the region could only be accomplished at the negotiating table.⁷⁵ On 18 July, King Hans proposed to mediate. Lübeck was inclined to be in favour of the offer and agreed that negotiations should start on 24 June 1513 in Copenhagen. In order to contain the conflict, the Danish king called upon the Wends to refrain from attacks against the Dutch. Lübeck and its allies refused to adhere to the proposal, but nonetheless informed Stralsund about the Danish offer and about the request, directed to Bremen, to try to negotiate a one-year truce with Holland.⁷⁶

The arrival of imperial ambassadors in Lübeck in August obliged the Lübeck council to start bilateral negotiations with Habsburg. The mission, for which preparations had already begun in July, was headed by the emperor's councillor and pensionary Jürgen Hagemeyer, who was accompanied by the imperial herald Segemond Duytschlant. They carried instructions to establish free trade in Denmark and the Baltic and to obtain indemnities for the captures at Hella.⁷⁷ Lübeck consulted its Wend partners by letter. The cities were not very happy with the imperial intervention and still contemplated accepting the Danish offer to mediate.⁷⁸ It took considerable effort on the part of the Habsburg delegation to establish a treaty which obliged Lübeck to withdraw its navy and to sign a two-month truce.⁷⁹ Both parties agreed to use the truce to prepare a Diet at the imperial court before Christmas 1512. During the negotiations around Christmas, in which Amsterdam's pensionary Coen Janszn. played a leading role, both parties agreed on a truce last-

74 HR III/6, pp. 326-327 nr. 315. In a letter to Danzig, Lübeck justified the war, arguing that: '*wes nicht allene uns, ock juwen erszamheiden (i.e. Danzig) neven alle oosterschen steden dan ock denszulven steden van der hanzze sampt den kunthoren unde suster gemener wolfarth beft afgedragen dath de hollanders, zelanders ende westfrieslanders szo wijde wo oghenschiynlick unde to vele vordarve sijn . . . sze to beveden und myth orlage dar sustes ander myddel nich wohl tolangen van sulker orer vorkerynghe tho bringen . . .*'.

75 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 47. Lübeck had difficulties in getting support for the War among the Wend Cities. Danzig was opposed to an anti-Dutch alliance. Wismar and Rostock kept their distances as they disapproved of the attack at Hella. Hamburg, on the other hand, had not been involved in the war against Denmark but now was involved in frenzied activity against the Hollanders and captured several ships from Amsterdam. HR III/6, p. 326 nr. 314 and pp. 328-329 nr. 320. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', pp. 249-250. Ter Gouw, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam* III, pp. 329-330, 350.

76 HR III/6, pp. 402-403 nr. 428-430.

77 HR III/6, 420 nr. 459. NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 47vo. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 253.

78 HR III/6, pp. 412-416, nr. 445-450. Letters from August 21, 22 and 23. Compare G. Waitz, *Lübeck unter Jürgen Wullenwever und die europäische Politik*, I (Berlijn 1855) pp. 18, 253.

79 HR III/6, pp. 418-419 nr. 456. NA The Hague inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 47.

ing until 6 January 1514, which paved the way for further peace negotiations.⁸⁰

Despite the agreement, Holland's cities did not seem very interested in resolving the matter. During deliberations on 4 April 1513, concerned with sending new missions to the Baltic, Leiden's council limited itself to some obligatory remarks on the costs involved. Haarlem's council resolutions of 14 April record the remark that 'one would not negotiate about the eastern matter, nor would one undertake much'.⁸¹ Peace talks were apparently also scheduled for the Diet in Malines in May, but on that occasion all attention was focused on the approaching marriage between Charles V's sister Isabelle and Denmark's prince royal, Christian II.⁸² The peace process, nonetheless, accelerated when on 27 June delegates from Amsterdam, Enkhuizen and Lübeck met in Copenhagen to attend Christian's II coronation festivities. Both sides emphasized the coincidental nature of their meeting and stated that they 'purely acted for the benefit of peace' and not as official representatives of the emperor or their home towns. The Dutch delegation had received instructions only to pursue improved trading conditions in Denmark.⁸³ The delegates agreed to prolong the truce for another year, until Epiphany, 6 January 1515, and suggested reopening peace negotiations around Pentecost 1514 in Bremen. Both sides agreed to appoint arbiters from a neutral city. Amsterdam and Lübeck promised to inform each other about the ratification of their proposals before 16 October.⁸⁴

In an attempt to exclude both the Low Countries and the emperor from the conflict, Lübeck had requested that the kontor at Bruges convince Amsterdam and the Watercities to engage in further negotiations at the urban or regional level. On 9 August 1513, representatives from the Bruges kontor wrote that they had done everything within their power to prevent imperial intervention. It was, however, forced to give up its attempts because the kontor, in its own words, 'did not possess any authority or good-will, nor did it get any response in Holland'.⁸⁵ Such a statement not only reveals the position of the kontor in Holland, it also indicates that the Wends clearly sensed that linking the emperor's authority to the general

80 NA The Hague inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 47. Ward wrongly presumes that the Habsburg delegation was headed by the treasurer-general Roeland LeFèvre. Ward, *Cities and States*, pp. 204, 305. As was the case in August, Jürgen Hagemeyer was charged with this task. The Wend cities were represented by Matthias Meyer, dean of the Hildesheim church, and Matthaues Pakenbusch, syndicus in Lübeck. Statens Arkive Kopenhagen, Rigsarkivet inv. 301 Tyske Kancelli, Hansestæderne A II.6 (Instruction for the Wend delegation, 2 November 1512)

81 Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 204 note 479. RA Leiden SA.I inv. 592, fol. 32. MA Haarlem Vroedschapsres. 1501-1516, fol. 117vo.-118vo. ('*dat men in dat Oesterspul nyet en reden noch veel dartoe doen en sal'*)

82 Ward, *Cities and States*, pp. 305-306.

83 ASH inv. 2406a Memoir 1514, fol. 47vo. The Dutch delegation was headed by Cornelis Bogaert and Coen Janszn., both from Amsterdam.

84 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406 Copenhagen Agreement 1514, fol. 48-48vo. HR III/6, pp. 462-463 nr. 511. The Copenhagen agreement was signed by Herman Meyer, burgermaster, Johann Meyer, council member, Dr. Mattheus Pakenbusch, syndicus, all from Lübeck. Cornelis Bogaert, licentiate and the pensionary Coen Janszn. signed with Dirk Harthenzn., secretary in Enkhuizen.

85 HR III/6, pp. 490-491 nr. 529 with wrong date.

well-being of the Habsburg Low Countries seriously reinforced Holland's position at the negotiating table.

On 24 April 1514, the Copenhagen agreement was discussed during a regional Wend Diet. The cities agreed to put their objections to the Hollanders on paper and enabled their intended delegates to act with full powers of procuration.⁸⁶ This rather loosely formulated mandate contrasts markedly with the detailed instructions that the Habsburg government gave to its delegates.⁸⁷ The ambassadors Albrecht van Loo⁸⁸, advocate of the Common Land, Aernt van der Goes, councillor in Holland and pensionary of the city of Delft, and the Amsterdam secretary Coen Janszn. were ordered to demand compensation for all damages. Should Lübeck object to such demands, 'which was hardly imaginable', the Habsburg ambassadors were allowed to call upon the mediators in order to establish a long-term truce at the very least. The instruction emphasized that in the event of earlier matters being brought up, the minutes of the Bruges Diet of 1504 had to be taken as a guideline for further discussions.⁸⁹ This condition was to become a ticklish matter during the Bremen Diet.

On 17 May, Lübeck requested a postponement of the Diet. Dangerous travelling conditions caused by the Frisian wars obliged representatives from Brunswick, who were to act as mediators on behalf of the Wend cities, to cancel their journey. On 24 May, Amsterdam wrote claiming to have no objections to the postponement of the conference, but contacts with the regent revealed that she preferred to meet on the scheduled date, since her ambassadors were already on their way.⁹⁰ It was unexpected international developments, however, that forced Margaret to recall her ambassadors. The immediate cause was the increasing threat from Charles of Guelders, who had succeeded in forging an anti-Habsburg alliance with France, Denmark and the Dukes of Brittany and Albany. The Duke of Guelders had also invited the German Hanse, and the Wend towns in particular, to join the coalition with the clear intention to 'chase the Hollanders out of the navigation and trade in both east and west'. On 29 June, a Wend Diet was dedicated to debating this invitation; however, although such an alliance would completely encircle the Low Countries, the project was considered to be too ambitious.⁹¹ Nevertheless, it caused the postponement of the Bremen Conference until the autumn of 1514.

86 Ibidem, pp. 530-531 nr. 558

87 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Letters of Procuracy, fol. 49-50. See Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 204 note 481.

88 Albrecht van Loo (1472-1525) had succeeded Frans Coebel in the office of Advocate of the Common Land in 1513. He also was to be dismissed in 1524 after he had accepted a post as councillor of Charles V in the Court of Holland, which was considered incompatible with his office as advocate and representative of the interests of Holland's cities. Ward, *Cities and States*, p. 56. Fölting, 'Landsadvocaten', pp. 312-314.

89 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Letters of Procuracy, fol. 50vo. ('*dat niet wel te geloven en is*').

90 HR III/6, pp. 530-531 nrs. 570, 571, 573, 575.

91 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 254. HR III/6, 530-531 nr. 558.

The Bremen Diet

Success at the Bremen Diet of 8-27 September 1514 depended on the willingness of both parties to reach a sustained peace and an agreement on all former trading issues. On the basis of the disappointing outcomes of former Diets between 1504 and 1508, the latter issue was especially likely to cause many problems.⁹² Within this context, the election of referees, announced in the Copenhagen agreement of 1513, was a sensible measure. Thanks to their effort a compromise was brought about which resulted in a ten-year truce and an arrangement which foresaw the resolution of all outstanding matters in the immediate future.⁹³

The limited success of the Diet was the result of the incompatibility of the starting points of both the Wend and Habsburg delegations. While the Habsburg ambassadors had clear instructions to begin negotiations on the basis of the results attained during the Bruges Diet of 1504, the Wend cities refused to do so.⁹⁴ Arguing that their cities had never ratified the agreement, they were obliged to take the treaty signed in Münster in 1479 as a basis for further talks. Such a standpoint allowed them to question all increases in taxes and the imposition of new levies in the Habsburg Low Countries thereafter.⁹⁵ Pointing to the poor results of the Copenhagen treaty of 1441 which, though it marked the end of the Holland-Wend war of 1438-1441, had never developed into a sustained peace or arranged compensation for damages, the Wends offered compensation for damages inflicted on both parties since then. The Habsburg delegates, however, refused to discuss such earlier matters, pointing out that the Bruges agreement stipulated that 'all former matters were resolved and declared non-existent'.⁹⁶

With the help of the referees, who behind closed doors dealt constantly with one or other of the parties, the delegations tried to put an end to the deadlock. During a meeting between the Wends and the referees, the true motive behind the Wends' diplomatic strategy surfaced when they declared that 'Amsterdam and the other small Watercities were damaging merchant shipping and it would be best if they would stay out of the water and limit themselves to the farming duties to which

92 See Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', pp. 227-235.

93 Minutes of the Bremen Conference exist in both a Low-German and Dutch version. Differences between the two mostly concern different interpretations of what was addressed behind closed doors and conflicting views related to diplomatic procedures. The Dutch minutes were drafted by the Amsterdam pensionary Coen Janszn. See HR III/6, pp. 581-601, nr. 626 and NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 52-67vo.

94 The Bruges Diet had resulted in a draft treaty in which all former conflicts regarding the raising of tolls and import charges by the Hollanders since 1479 to the detriment of the Wends were settled. The draft was expected to pave the way for a sustained peace between Holland and the Wends and was to mark the end of a long period of prolonged truces, which started with the conclusion of the Copenhagen Treaty of 1441. Although the Wend delegation had accepted the Bruges treaty in 1504, their home cities annulled it unilaterally by refusing retrospective ratification.

95 Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 256-257.

96 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 58. ('*allen die oude questien af ende teniet wesen soudent*')

they were born'.⁹⁷ It explains why the Wends focused primarily on Amsterdam and its northern region. Clearly the Wends tried to avoid damaging their own interests elsewhere in the Low Countries, underlining Amsterdam's support for King Hans during the Wend-Danish war.⁹⁸ Hearing this, the Habsburg delegation, appalled by the impertinent Wend attitude, threatened to leave the conference. They complained about the untrustworthiness of the Wend representatives who seemed to have lost all common sense, refusing to restrict themselves to the major issues and constantly coming up with new complaints which prevented an agreement being reached. There was no doubt, the Habsburg delegates stated, 'that the Wends had no intention of negotiating any sort of peace agreement whatsoever'.⁹⁹

Such an attitude arose from the fact that several Wend cities dispensed with procurations which did not allow a peace treaty to be signed without all earlier issues being provided for.¹⁰⁰ That there were fundamental differences within the Wend delegation became clear on 16 September as the demands relating to the captures at Helsingör and Hella were about to be discussed. Since neither Stralsund nor Wismar had been involved in the attacks, their representatives could not produce the mandates required to discuss the matter. As their home towns had refused to acknowledge any responsibility for the attacks, the representatives had clear instructions to avoid being included in the debt collection. The splitting up of the Wend delegation could only be avoided by sending the Stralsund and Wismar delegates home '*tom ende dat se den steden ime handel oft in den dingen nenen hinder deden*'.¹⁰¹

Still, success could only be obtained by carefully separating the main issue from matters of secondary importance. With regard to the latter, the arbiters suggested that each party select two scholars who were to solve all old and new matters, including those relating to the demanded compensation and increased charges. Suggestions put forward by the Habsburg ambassadors to ask the emperor, as the sovereign of both Hollanders and Wends, to appoint a *delegaet rechter* or delegated judge, were blocked by the Wends. They pointed out that not all Wend cities were subjects of the emperor and on this basis simply refused his intervention.¹⁰² The final compromise foresaw the election of four scholars from Cologne, Ghent, Utrecht or Cambrai,¹⁰³ who with the help of a supervisor were to reach a conclu-

97 Ibidem, fol. 60vo. ('*die van Amsterdam ende andere cleyne Watersteden die coopvaert scadende waren ende dat beter waren dat zij uijten wateren bleven doende huer lantneringhe daer toe sij badt gheboren ware*').

98 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fols. 56vo., 60.

99 Ibidem, fol. 61.

100 Ibidem, fol. 62.

101 HR III/6 p. 588 nr. 626 § 55-56. Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', p. 258.

102 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 63vo.

103 This choice was justified with the argument that '*twelcke steden veel geleerde personen waren residerende ende practiserende inden raden aldaer wesende daer partijen recours souden hebben totten geleerden om thebben raet ende consultatien*.' NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 64.

sion within the coming two years. Because none of the parties possessed a mandate allowing them to sign the agreement, Amsterdam and Lübeck exchanged promises to inform each other within a year after ratification of the proposal.¹⁰⁴

The agreement freed the way for further negotiations on the principal issue. The parties involved decided to take the Copenhagen treaty of 1513 as a starting point, which had stipulated that in the event of a peace treaty remaining out of reach, an armistice should be established.¹⁰⁵ Although the Wends were initially only prepared for a one-year truce, negotiations finally resulted in a ten-year agreement, which would last until one of the parties decided to revoke its commitments by letter. Both sides were allowed one year to inform their merchants of the new situation, enabling them to secure their commodities and to guarantee a safe passage home.¹⁰⁶ On 20 September, after twelve days of difficult talks, the negotiators finally decided to have the minutes of the Diet drafted and to ask the Bremen Council to attach its seal to the document.

The Habsburg delegation, was seriously annoyed when the Wends used the time needed for the final editing of the treaty to return to matters related to the increase in toll tariffs and taxes on imported beer from Hamburg to Holland, and to Amsterdam in particular.¹⁰⁷ At Lübeck's request, to prevent abuses in toll-raising by private collectors, the Habsburg delegation promised to install tariff boards at all relevant locations and to see to it that all collectors accused of extortion were brought to trial, as was already the case in Antwerp. Wend demands to abolish all toll and tax rises were rejected by the ambassadors who insisted that such matters were to be treated by the scholars to be appointed according to the newly reached agreement. Nonetheless, Hamburg refused to back down, demanding that charges on Hamburg beer in Amsterdam be reduced to the level agreed upon in the Copenhagen treaty of 1441. The Habsburg ambassador, however, stuck to the Bruges agreement of 1504, which stipulated that all earlier demands linked to the Copenhagen treaty be nullified. Furthermore, they pointed out that the deadlock resulting from the incapacity of the Wend delegation to produce mandates which allowed them to negotiate on the basis of the 1504 agreements had forced the Habsburg delegation to transfer all remaining matters to the committee of neutral specialists.¹⁰⁸

Hamburg's refusal to compromise posed a serious threat to a successful conclusion of the conference and almost provoked the Habsburg delegation to leave Bremen without a treaty being signed.¹⁰⁹ Controversies within the Wend delegation increased when the Hamburg delegate revealed that according to his mandate a treaty could only be signed after a reduction in import taxes was obtained. In order to force a breakthrough, the conference was suspended for several days in order to al-

104 Ibidem, fol. 63vo.-64.

105 HR III/6, p. 591 nr. 626 § 69-72.

106 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 64vo.-65.

107 Ibidem, fol. 64vo..

108 Ibidem, fol. 65vo-66vo. HR III/6 pp. 596, nr. 626 § 103-104.

109 NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 66vo.

low the Hamburg delegate to consult the local authorities, hoping that they would soften their demands. The council refused, however, to reconsider its position, forcing the Wend delegation to increase pressure on the returning Hamburg delegate in order to convince him to sign the treaty anyway. They used a revealing argument, stating that his signature did not imply that new demands could not be brought forward during the ratification procedure.¹¹⁰ In other words, the final ratification procedure was seen as an opportunity to force alterations to the already signed agreement, in accordance with the wishes of the local Wend governments.

When the peace plan was finally put on the table, disagreements arose concerning the phrasing of the final conditions. The head of the Habsburg delegation, Albrecht van Loo, lost his temper, as the Wends insisted that they would resume trading relations with the Habsburg Low Countries '*up ore olden friiheit and rechticheit*', meaning that they insisted on the continuation of their former freedoms and rights. Such a phrase was not only regarded as an abuse of the Bruges recess of 1504, at the same time it jeopardized all future negotiations because it implied that the Wends were not prepared to accept any interference with their former trading rights and privileges in the Low Countries. Van Loo thereupon stated that his delegation did not possess a mandate that allowed them to confirm former privileges, as only the emperor had the authority to do so. The Habsburg ambassadors preferred, as they put it, 'to be imprisoned for the next five years' rather than be obliged to acknowledge this clause.¹¹¹ Only once the barb had been removed from the statement, whereby both sides agreed on the more general phrasing '*so se van oldinges gedan hebben*', did the delegates and the Bremen referees finally put their signatures to the document.¹¹²

The Battle of Procedures

In order to gain deeper insight into the distribution of power between the delegations attending the Bremen Diet, an analysis of the procedural matters is necessary. The atmosphere of the conference was dictated by almost endless squabbles related to the acknowledgement of the referees who according to the Copenhagen agreement both parties had to bring with them, and about the exact content of the various mandates.¹¹³ The Habsburg delegation had received orders to ask the Bre-

110 HR III/6 pp. 596-597, nr. 626 § 107-109

111 HR III/6, pp. 599-601 no. 626 § 126-131. ('*wolden (liever) viif jar gefangen sitten*').

112 HR III/6, p. 601 nr. 626 § 131

113 Lahaine, *Die Hanse und Holland*, p. 255. Waitz, *Lübeck unter Jurgen Wullenwever*, I, pp. 18, 254-255. The Habsburg delegation was composed of Albrecht van Loo, Aert van der Goes, Jasper van Hamaele, council member, and Jacob Voicht, pensionary, both from Antwerp, Claes Heyne, burgher-master from Amsterdam and Coen Janszn., pensionary of that city. The Wend delegation arrived two days later, but negotiations really started on 12 September in Bremen's Townhall. The Wend delegation was headed by the Lübeck burgher-master Thomas van Wickede and syndicus Dr Mattheus Pakebusch. Hamburg, Wismar, Stralsund and Rostock also sent representatives.

men burgermasters to act as their referees. Arguing that the Wends had already approached them with a similar request, they initially refused. When the Habsburg delegation thereupon openly doubted Bremen's neutrality in Hanseatic matters, the burgermasters replied significantly that the conflict did not regard the German Hanse as a whole but only the Wend cities. Such an argument implicitly highlighted the conflicting interests of the Hanse members in general.¹¹⁴ Despite Wend protests that the Habsburg delegation acted contrary to the Copenhagen agreement of 1513, which prescribed that each delegation had to bring arbiters with them, they reluctantly agreed to a compromise. The Habsburg ambassadors were allowed to appoint four referees from amongst Bremen's council members. The Wends stuck to their own mediators, already appointed from Stade and Bremen.¹¹⁵ However, the implicit reproach that the Habsburg ambassadors were unreliable continued to determine the atmosphere in the conference room.¹¹⁶

Negotiations were complicated by vigorous attempts by the Wends to keep the exact content of their mandates in the dark. The Habsburg proposal that both sides should openly read their mandates was met with haughty refusal. It was suggested that although the Wend negotiators were acting on behalf of, and were ratified by, the individual cities, there was no reason to doubt their word or their decisions as they were also members of the urban councils who had to approve the outcome of the conference. For this reason, they declared that 'there was no reason to make their mandates public, because they were representatives of the Wend cities, implying that one simply had to believe them'.¹¹⁷ Such an attitude went against diplomatic practice which was of the opinion 'that a mandate and its contents represented the foundation of all negotiations, because only these reveal the extent of the representative's capacities'.¹¹⁸ The Wends undoubtedly wanted to leave matters unclear in order to mask internal disagreements. The Habsburg ambassadors, nonetheless, agreed to start negotiations on ratification, which as long as an agreement in accordance with their instructions was reached would not provoke any problems. The emperor's ratification would determine the votes of the urban councils in the Low Countries. The Wends, however, insisted on maintaining their refusal to inform the other party of their instructions. The Habsburg delegation could thus only hope that the written account of the decisions taken during the

¹¹⁴ NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a, Minutes Bremen Diet fol 52vo.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem, fol. 52vo.- 54vo. HR III/6, pp. 582-584 nr. 626 § 8-25. The four mediators were burgermaster Johan Thrup and the council members Hinrick Fasmer, Aernt van Holte and Dirck Werenberg.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem. The Habsburg delegation was annoyed at the Wends at the very beginning of the Conference as they simply took over the discussion: '*hoewel tvoirspreken toebehoirde den ambassaten representerende die persone vanden doirluchtigen ende genadigsten heere den ertshertoge*'. Also insulting was the Wend's attitude after a compromise on the election of the mediators was reached, and they '*gegaen vanden stedeuijs sonder oirlof an ons te nemen ofte enighe reverentie te doene . . .*'.

¹¹⁷ NA The Hague ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 55.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem.

conference would be absolutely binding for all parties.¹¹⁹ Within that context the Wend refusal to honour the Habsburg request to write down the issues discussed during the meeting can be regarded as a characteristic tactic as it deprived the Habsburg ambassadors of the opportunity of considering all the details closely.¹²⁰

In the next stage of the discussion, the Wends tried to narrow the scope of the conflict by presenting it as a matter that only concerned the provinces of Holland, Zeeland and Frisia. This was an attempt to eliminate the emperor's influence in the conflict, an aim that was reinforced by the Wends' request for separate mandates from the various provinces. By doing so they challenged the emperor's authority to decide in international trading matters. It would mean that an agreement would only apply to the provinces involved, which would allow the Wends to safeguard their trading interests in Flanders, for example. The Wends therefore argued that the emperor had no right to act as a participant during the negotiations and pointed to the attitude of the Burgundian duke Phillip the Good, who during the negotiations in Copenhagen in 1441 had deliberately taken, as they put it, a neutral position in order to reach a balanced agreement.¹²¹ The most important reason for the Wend position, however, was to be found in the rejection of the imperial mandates during a former Diet in Antwerp in 1504, despite the intervention of mediators from Münster in an attempt to find a solution. As had been the case then, the Wends insisted on negotiations on retrospective ratification.¹²²

Nevertheless, the Habsburg ambassadors succeeded in convincing their adversaries that they could only act in the name of the emperor and on behalf of the Low Countries in general. This had already been accepted during the Diets in Münster in 1479 and Bruges in 1504. Furthermore, the ambassadors argued, putting aside the imperial mandate would imply an unacceptable disdain for the emperor's position.¹²³ As such, the Habsburg delegation was able to maintain the threat suggested by the imperial mandate. At the same time, they were able to convince the Wends that all agreements concerned the Low Countries as a whole, which prevented the Wends from playing the various provinces off against each other. Thanks to a unified and well-defined imperial mandate, the Habsburg delegation was able to maintain closed ranks, while the Wends had enormous difficulties in overcoming internal conflicts.

The difference in diplomatic culture was reflected during the months in which the ratification of the Bremen treaty was to be brought into effect. In contrast to the

119 See also the Bremen Diet of 1530, where the same problem occurred. On that occasion, the Habsburg ambassadors shared the view that it would be useless to ask the Wends to inform them of the content of their mandates. It would be sufficient to keep reliable minutes of the sessions. NA The Hague inv. 2406a, Minutes Bremen Diet 1530, fol. 71.

120 HR III/6, p. 587 nr. 626 § 50. NA Den Haag ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 57.

121 HR III/6 p. 585-586 nr. 626 § 40.

122 NA Den Haag ASH inv. 2406a Minutes Bremen Diet, fol. 55.

123 Ibidem, fol. 56. HR III/6, p. 585 nr. 626 § 31-40. Hamburg adds: '*jedoch unvorfenglich unsen privilegien unde afgerichte saken*'.

Wend cities, which took more than six months to produce the demanded ratification by their urban councils, the regent in the Low Countries acknowledged the treaty instantly and unconditionally. The Wend cities, however, produced differing statements and only Lübeck refrained from additional conditions. As was to be expected, Wismar and Rostock maintained the position that they could not be held responsible for the damage inflicted on the Dutch during the raids at sea. Lüneburg added the significant phrase *'in deme unde so verne uns dat sulvige benefens den anderen Wendesschen steden boruuret efte belanget'* indicating that the cities wanted exceptional status in a number of non-defined matters. Hamburg adhered to its attitude, previously displayed during the conference, insisting that the treaty did not replace former privileges and completed matters.¹²⁴ The differing positions underline the lack of coherence among the Wend Cities. Despite former agreements reached at the negotiating table, the cities were inclined to defend their private interests. Such a position made it extremely difficult for foreign powers to reach a common agreement that implicated all Wend Cities. Under such conditions the Bremen agreement already contained the germ of a new conflict.

Conclusions

Both Lahaine and Vollbehr situate the Bremen Conference in the series of Dutch-Wend conferences which ended without any positive achievement.¹²⁵ From the Wend point of view, none of the initial goals were realized, albeit that the ten-year truce allowed the reopening of trading relations for the Wends in the Low Countries. I, however, would argue that although the Wends won the battle of Hella, they lost the war at the conference table in Bremen. Internal divisions among the coalition members during the conference seriously weakened their position, not only during the Bremen Diet but also for future negotiations. Despite several expensive military operations, all attempts to chase the Hollanders from the Baltic had failed. In the diplomatic arena, Lübeck and its Wend allies had been unable to limit the emperor's role in the process by trying to narrow down the conflict to an inter-urban matter which only concerned Amsterdam and the Watercities on the one hand, and Lübeck and its allies on the other. The Hollanders, on the other hand, had managed to strengthen their trading positions in both the Baltic and the Low Countries. Trading relations with Denmark and the regions in the Baltic area were restored, allowing Holland to continue its advance through the Sound. It was also able to maintain its protectionist policies within the territories of the Habsburg Low Countries through the increase of toll charges and import taxes. Since the treaty affected the Habsburg Low Countries in general, it put a limit on tradition-

¹²⁴ HR III/6, p. 603 nr. 628.

¹²⁵ Lahaine, 'Die Hanse und Holland', pp. 257-258. Vollbehr, *Die Holländer*, p. 63.

al Hanseatic policies which played on internal economic divisions in the Low Countries to its own advantage.

The supporting role of the central government in Brussels and that of the regent and the emperor in particular cannot be overestimated. This became very clear in 1510, when the emperor consciously distanced himself from Lübeck by putting his influence behind the defence of Holland's trading interests. Through appropriate interventions by the regent and the Brussels government, discord among Holland's Estates and cities was overcome and pressure on the Wends increased. Because Holland's Estates refused to supply adequate financial support for the planned military operations, only diplomacy could resolve the conflict. Thanks to the relentless support of both the emperor and the regent, who sent their highest ranking officials and trustees, Lübeck and the Wends were finally convinced of the need for bilateral negotiations. The imperial authority turned out to be a key factor in the positive results obtained by the Habsburg ambassadors in Bremen. The emperor's mandates and procurations guaranteed that the Habsburg delegation could act in unity. Also, the immediate ratification of the treaty by the regent assured the Hollanders of the emperor's support in the future. Although the battle of Hella had made clear that this would not necessarily develop into increased military threats to the Wends, it nonetheless implied that the emperor would continue to defend Holland's economic interests at a diplomatic level in both the Low Countries and the Baltic. The outcome of the Bremen Diet shows that trading conditions were able to be redefined at the negotiating table. As such the emperor and the central government in Brussels were indispensable for the advance of Holland's trade in the Baltic.