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Klaus Störtebeker (1360 in Wismar – 20 October 1401 in Hamburg) and the Vitalian Brotherhood

Klaus Störtebeker was a leader and the best known representative of a companionship of privateers known as the Vitalian Brotherhood or the Victual Brothers. The Vitalian Brotherhood had their name from the siege of Stockholm, when they supplied the people in Stockholm with malt and corn. Störtebeker was the Robin Hood of the East- and the North Sea. He could drink 4 liters of beer in one gulp. There are lots of stories about Störtebeker. In the year 1394 the Vitalian Brotherhood attacked rich businessmen and robbed them. Gotland was the headquarter of the Vitalien brotherhood till 1398. In 1398 the Vitalien brotherhood lost a battle and some of them became buccaneer for nobleman.

Five men were a simple prey for privateers with 50-100 armed people. They were just a few firearms, with crossbows the Vitalian brotherhood shoot on the ships.

With letters of marque the sale of the products to the cities at the coast were approved.

Glossary:

English	Deutsch	Español
Vitalian Brotherhood (also Victual Brothers)	Vitalienbrüder	Hermandad de los Vituallas o Hermandad Vitaliana
siege	Belagerung	sitio
malt	Malz	malta
wheat	Weizen	trigo
gulp	Schluck	trago
legend	Legende	leyenda
headquarter	Hauptquartier	cuartel general
knight	Ritter	caballero
buccaneer	Kaperfahrer	corsario
prey	Beute	botín
privateer	Kaperschiff oder Freibeuter	corsario (embarcación o pirata)
armed people	Bewaffnete	persona armada
firearm	Feuerwaffe	arma de fuego
crossbow	Armbrust	ballesta
Letter of marque	Kaperbrief	permiso de corsario
to approve	genehmigen	autorizar / conceder

Life on a pirate ship

Life on board was very hard and full of dangers. On a pirate ship there were usually 50-100 men because the pirates had to be more men than the enemy on a robbery. An important rule on board was 'No prey, no pay' which means the prey was divided into parts so everyone could get paid. Before the pirates started their journey they signed a contract which determined the rules on the ship. It also was clear from the start who would be the captain. The one who was the captain got the biggest part of the prey but on a ship every pirate had the same rights. The most important jobs on the ship were the cooper, the carpenter and the doctor. The cooper had to keep an eye on the water and the wine, the doctor had to help the wounded men after a battle. The food on the ship was often the same and during the day there wasn't much the pirates could do between two robberies. Besides that there were serious illnesses on board. A lot of pirates, for example, suffered from scurvy because they didn't eat enough vitamin c.

The Jolly Roger

In shipping, flags were used to send signals. The flag was also important to inform other ships for example if somebody was ill on board or which king the crew served. The name Jolly Roger comes from the French word: "joli rouge" that means "nice red". Red is the oldest signal colour. It means that there is a contagious illness on board. First pirates also had a red coloured flag. Only since 1700 they got the black skull flag. With the flag the pirates wanted their victims to get scared. The black flag means don't fight, then we will not kill you. The red coloured flag means that the pirates are not going to take prisoners.

The capture of ship in the Middle Ages

Kings and Princes used to send letters of marque to pirates if the country didn't have enough money. Most of them were poor. They spent the last money on a privateer to save the country. The pirates had to share the prey with the kings when they captured another ship.

Rules on a pirate ship

1. Everybody on board has the same rights.
2. It's forbidden to gamble on cards on the ship.
3. The lights must be turned out at eight o'clock. No one is allowed to drink in the cabins.
4. Everybody has to take care of his weapons.
5. Kids and women aren't allowed on the ship.
6. You will get killed or will be left behind on a lonely island if you leave the ship or a battleground without permission.
7. It is forbidden to fight on the ship.
8. Nobody is allowed to leave the ship until everybody has earned enough money.

The Hanseatic League

The Hanseatic League (in German “Hanse” or “Hansa”) was an organization and large commercial network of German shipping merchants, who supply Europe with goods from all over the world. “Hanse” means “Einheit”, in English it’s “unit”. It was a community with the same interests in political powers and the same cultural background. It was a political power and the members became rich. It existed between the 12th and 17th century and 200 countries were a part of it. The goals of the Hanseatic League was the safety of the countries that belong to it (e.g. Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen...). German cities like Hamburg, Lübeck or Bremen formed part of it and were free and independent. Lübeck was the first German city that founded it and there was the first harbour. Lübeck was very well connected with the world trade cities.

An advantage of the Hanseatic League were good traffic conditions between the Baltic and the North Sea with their ships (called “Kogge”). However, pirates were a problem for them.

The flags of the Hanseatic States are red and white. The Kogge, their transport ship, was built to carry many goods, it’s strong and has one mast. But there are two more kinds of ships: The “Holk” which is very strong and the “Boyer” which is smaller and better for flat parts of the sea.



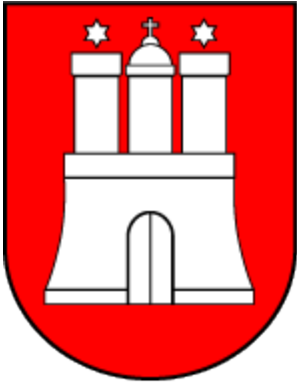
The Kogge



The Holk



The Boyer



The flag of Hamburg



The flag of Lübeck



The flag of Bremen

Die Hanse- The Hanseatic League- La Liga Hanseática o Hansa

(federación comercial y defensiva de ciudades del norte de Alemania y de comunidades de comerciantes alemanes en el mar Báltico, los Países Bajos, Suecia, Polonia y Rusia, así como regiones que ahora se encuentran en Estonia, Letonia y Lituania)

Glossary

Bedingung Es gab gute Verkehrsbedingungen.	condition The traffic conditions were excellent.	la condición Había buenas condiciones de tráfico.
einen Teil davon bilden Deutschland bildet ein Teil der EU.	to form a part of it Germany forms a part of the EU.	formar una parte de eso Alemania forma parte de la EU.
Gemeinde Lilienthal ist eine Gemeinde.	community Lilienthal is a community.	la comunidad Lilienthal es una comunidad.
kulturelle Hintergründe Mérida hat kulturelle Hintergründe.	cultural backgrounds Mérida has cultural backgrounds.	los fondos culturales Mérida tiene fondos culturales.
politische Kräfte Jedes Land hat politische Kräfte.	political powers Every country has political powers.	las fuerzas políticas Todos los países tienen fuerzas políticas.
Sicherheit Sicherheit ist sehr wichtig.	safety Safety is very important.	la seguridad La seguridad es muy importante.
mit etw. verbunden sein Viele Städte waren durch das Vertriebsnetz miteinander verbunden.	be connect with sth. Many cities were connected to each other through the commercial network.	estar conectado/a con algo Muchas ciudades estaban conectadas por la red de distribución.
Geschäftsleute Viele Geschäftsleute sind reich.	shipping agent Many shipping agent are rich.	los empresarios Muchos empresarios son ricos.
Vertriebsnetz Mein Vater arbeitet in einem Vertriebsnetz.	commercial network My father works in a commercial network.	la red de distribución Mi padre trabaja en una red de distribución.
Vorteil Das ist ein Vorteil.	advantage That's an advantage.	la ventaja Eso es una ventaja.
Waren Schiffe transportieren Waren.	goods Ships transport goods.	la mercancía Barcos transportan mercancías.
Welthandelsstädte Zu den Welthandelsstädten gehörte z.B Lübeck.	world trade cities Lübeck was one of the world trade cities.	las ciudades del comercio internacional Lübeck fue una de las ciudades del comercio internacional.

Hamburg in the 14th century

In the 14th century Hamburg was very rich because Hamburg got a lot of money from the Hanseatic League. Churches were built and important properties were bought by people in the surrounding area.

In the 14th century there was a big growth in population:

- Landowners became richer → therefore the power of the Hanseatic League was under pressure
- Great Britain also became stronger → There was less maritime trade and therefore the income of the Hanseatic League became smaller
- Hamburg led the Hanseatic League
- Hamburg's first constitution was written down in 1410 (where the citizens' rights were determined)
- In 1420 Hamburg and Lübeck captured the castle of "Bergedorfer" → now the land route is safe for the Hanseatic League.
- In 1450 a new wider ship was built so the sea lane was marked by barrels
- In 1450 the last powerful man (Count of Schauenburger) who defended the rights of the Hanseatic league died
- In 1458/1483 political unrests were solved by the senior official

Klaus Störtebeker and the Victual Brothers

In 1394 Goedeke Michels and Klaus Störtebeker became the leaders of the "Vitailleurs" (French for mercenaries: people who sell goods) in English "Victual brothers". They were a large group of pirates. "Victual" means food, so they got their name from their doing: Under control of Störtebeker and Goedeke Michels they robbed food in the harbours of the Baltic Sea and the North Sea.

The mercenaries lived hidden on Gotland (a Swedish island). A few years later in 1398 the Victual brothers were driven away by the "Teutonic Order" (a community of religious people in Germany), so they escaped to the North Sea.

The pirates robbed ships of the Hanse. Because of that the members of the Hanse lost most of their good, so they started to follow and punish the Victual brothers. Finally they caught Störtebeker and in 1401 he was executed with his friend Michels in Hamburg.