



# Muenster and the Hanseatic League

## Abstract

The Hanseatic economic area emerged at around AD 1250. It was a network of traders spanning from Bruges to Nowogorod to trade in English wool, Flanders cloth, Norwegian cured cod, Russian furs and wax and grains from the hinterland of the southern Baltic Sea.

The Hanseatic League had its origin in early remote merchant cooperatives of German tradesmen in the most important cities of the above trading system like Bruges and London.

This economic network of the Baltic Sea following the most commonly used traffic routes became a dominating factor in the European economy of the late medieval times, and along with it the tradesmen of the "dudeschen Hanse" (German Hanse) who brought their business into the area gained in importance.

Münster became a significant passage area between the commercial metropolis Cologne and the Netherlands, Flanders and England. When in 1469 Cologne was expelled from the Hanseatic League Muenster took the leading role in the whole of Westphalia.

In 1554 it was decided that Muenster had to lead the congregation of the Westphalian cities. The balance of power had shifted, and Muenster had clearly become the economic centre of Westphalia.

Source: Franz-Josef Jakobi, *Geschichte der Stadt Münster* Münster: 1993, pp. 638 and 647

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THE EXTENT OF THE  
HANSA  
about 1400

Scale 1:19,000,000

100 200 300 Miles

Groups of Hansa Towns:  
 Wendish  
 Pomeranian  
 Prussian  
 Livonian  
 Swedish  
 Lithuanian  
 Slavonic  
 Westphalian  
 Lower Rhenish  
 Dutch

For the legend for foreign parts of the Hansa are underlined with red, the factors are underlined with black, towns not belonging to the Hansa are printed in smaller type.



**The Extent of the Hanseatic League at about 1400** | H.F. Helmolt, History of the World, Volume VII, Dodd Mead 1902. Plate between pages 28 and 29. | This file is published under the ?Creative Commons Namensnennung-Weitergabe unter gleichen Bedingungen Deutschland? in Version 3.0 (?CC-by-sa 3.0/de?) licence.

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